Scandalous Contract Award

Newswatch

Exclusive

JUNE 7, 1993 ₦20.00 NIGERIA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

IBB, Abiola & I

By Shehu Yar'Adua

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Newswatch

June 7, 1993 NIGERIA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE VOL. 17 NO. 23

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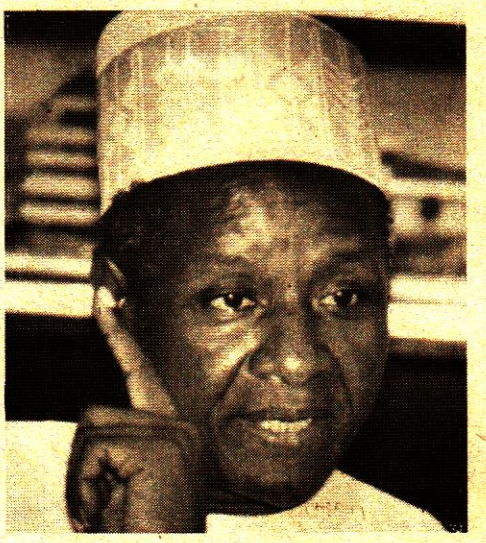

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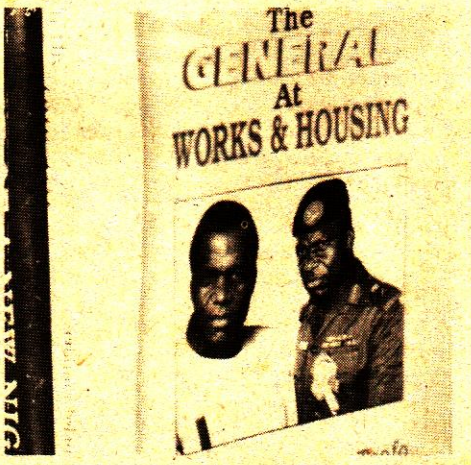

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■ Sickening Arrangement

Your report on Air Nigeria (May 10) is fascinating and intriguing. I am amazed that the government has not even given approval to the formation and operations of the new(?) airline and yet it has virtually taken off. Are you sure this is not another covert implementation of an IMF/World Bank "hidden agenda" ostensibly to help Nigeria's economic recovery? The whole arrangement is sickening as it is obvious proper ground work has not been done. I foresee the airline, if it takes off at all, being characterised by problems which will in no distant time lead to its collapse and billions of naira/dollars would have gone into a few private pockets. As usual the suffering masses will bear the crunch.

Emeka Jonah Eleweke,
Manchester, England.

Those who said honesty is the best policy probably didn't have Nigeria in mind because I can swear that the powers that be are not oblivious of the happenings in Nigeria Airways or Air Nigeria or whatever name it goes by. Otherwise, how could a head of a parastatal and a sub-committee he headed on their own disburse a life-line loan of $64 million, an amount that is more than two states' budgets?

Larry Chinekezi,
Onitsha, Anambra State.

However, one sees it, whatever the analysis and results, what is happening in Nigeria Airways is a genuine reflection of how the country is being managed. Other government establishments are not better. But, what baffles one most is the ghost establishment called Air Nigeria, whose rush shows a hidden agenda. Joji and his team should be reminded that no duty is more urgent than that of fulfilling a patriotic responsibility. They have not only failed, but disappointed the entire nation and posterity. They should be informed that public property is no longer no person's property. And in fact, what cannot be rationally justified must be gotten rid of, not because they are customary, but because they lower our humanity as a nation.

Nwosu Stanley Obinna,
Oshodi Lagos.

If Air Nigeria is the baby of Nigeria Airways, as *Newswatch* has made us to believe, then those canker-worms that have almost destroyed Nigeria Airways will definitely affect the life of Air Nigeria. An ugly face must definitely wear an ugly mask.

Hussaini Noah I.,
Jos.

I do not see the need for such a story because you have done several of it which did not help in the past. Not that it is your fault. No. You have exhausted virtually all your strength writing such stories to help cure our society but all your dynamic efforts have ended up yielding no positive fruits. You remember Fraud Incorporated and Fraud PLC? Please, spend your precious time on other pressing matters and leave this talk of fraud or scandal alone. We have had enough of them for cover stories.

Burning Brimstone,
Port Harcourt.

Are there no physicians in Nigeria to diagnose this sickly Nigeria Airways? God fearing, dedicated, and patriotic individuals should be recruited to handle the operations of both Nigeria Airways and Air Nigeria.

Kate Onyi Nwosu,
Etiti, Imo State.

Thanks to *Newswatch*, otherwise, how could we have known this apparent recklessness and levity in one of our notable institutions.

Ebele Nwanze,
Port Harcourt.

■ Our Shame

Is it an act of God that we have refused as a people and as a nation to make adequate preparation to cushion the effects of natural disasters, when it does occur? Must we always be caught off guard and consequently in total helplessness?

Segun Lawrence,
Zaria, Kaduna State.

The funny part is that the result of the panel of inquiry will not be made public and the culprits will never be prosecuted.

Ojiakor Joel Ikechukwu,
Enugu.

We are waiting for the panel and their report.

Olusola Gbemisola Esq,
Mafoluku, Oshodi, Lagos.

■ The Sudanese Problem

It is a shame on every self-respecting African to see what is happening in the Sudan and not do a thing about it. The government of Sudan, with aid received from some Arab states, is carrying out genocide on its people while the African leaders ignore this as an internal dispute. Since your leaders often emulate their European counterparts, why have they not put pressure on the United Nation as the Europeans did in the case of former Yugoslavia to send peace-keeping troops to the Sudan?

Like most wars this is an unjust war that must be stopped, so that the children and women of Sudan can live in peace.

T. Johnson,
Brentford, England.

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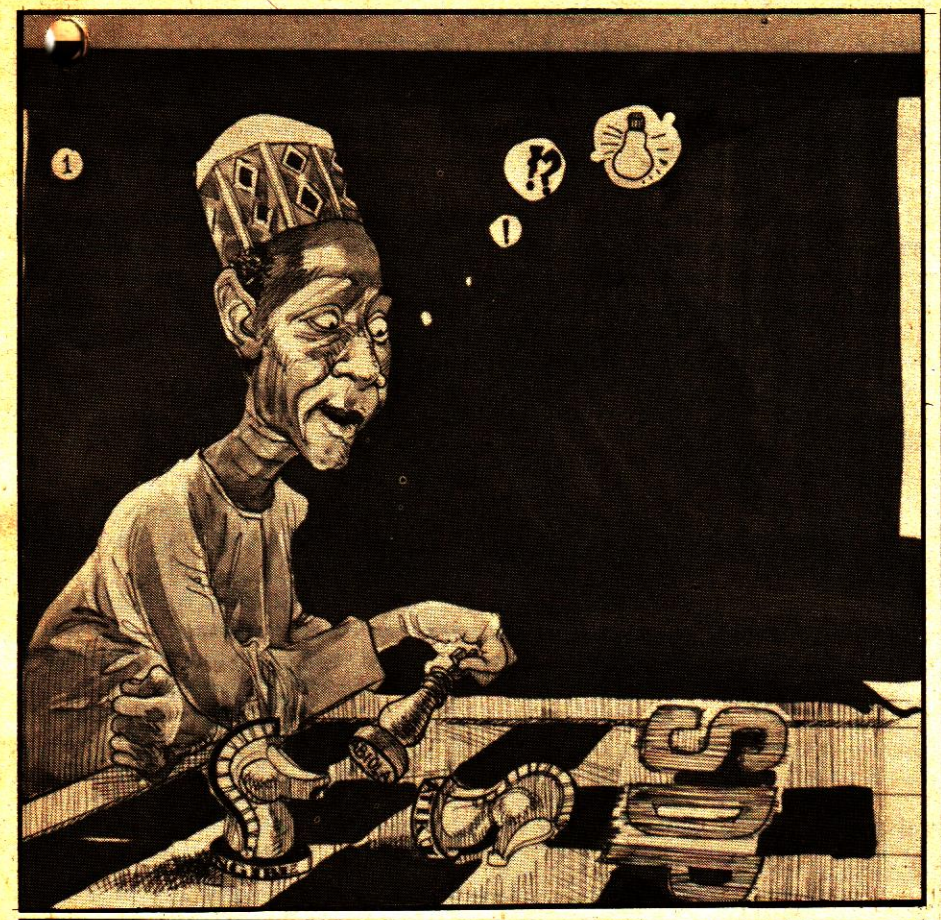
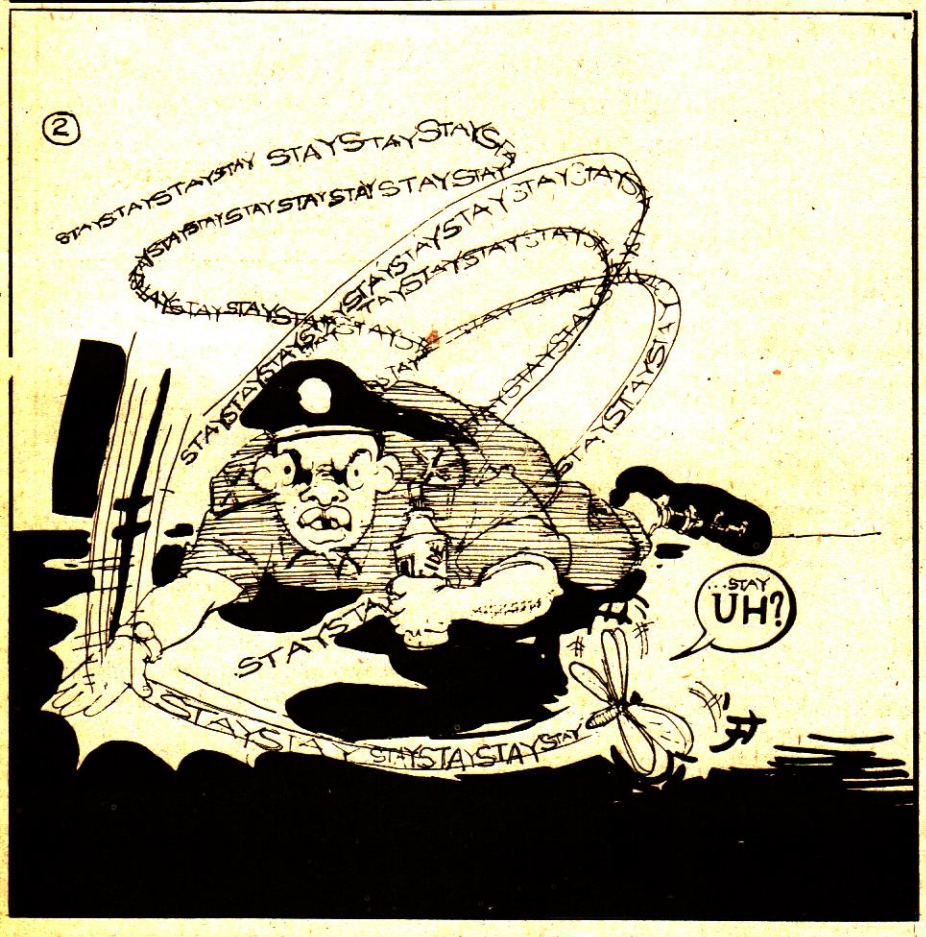




"QUOTES"

No matter how good the plan to manage an ecosystem, some people will cheat.

— Eugene Linden, on the protection of animal species from possible extinction by human poachers in ***Time*** *magazine.*

When problems persist that government is supposed to solve, people blame government for being inept.

— Robert Samuel in ***Newsweek.***

We believe in life before death.

— Advertisement in ***The Independent*** *Newspaper soliciting aid for poor countries.*

Africans must repudiate the sham excuse that their problems are a result of Western colonisation. No amount of money can do the job Africans must do for themselves.

— Walter E. Williams quoted in ***Reader's Digest.***

The anti-Yoruba drum being beaten by Nzeribe under the guise of "Igbo interest" is actually a strategy designed and constructed by NRC think-tank.

— Ezekiel Izuogu, in ***The Guardian*** *newspaper.*

The country (Nigeria) is in such disorder that a successor may be unequal to the task of putting it right.

— From "Mysterious" in ***The Economist.***

I believe that these parties formed by government are their own vehicles for leading us to civilian rule. So, once we come to the motor park, everybody will find his own vehicle.

—Adamu Ciroma, on the transition programme..

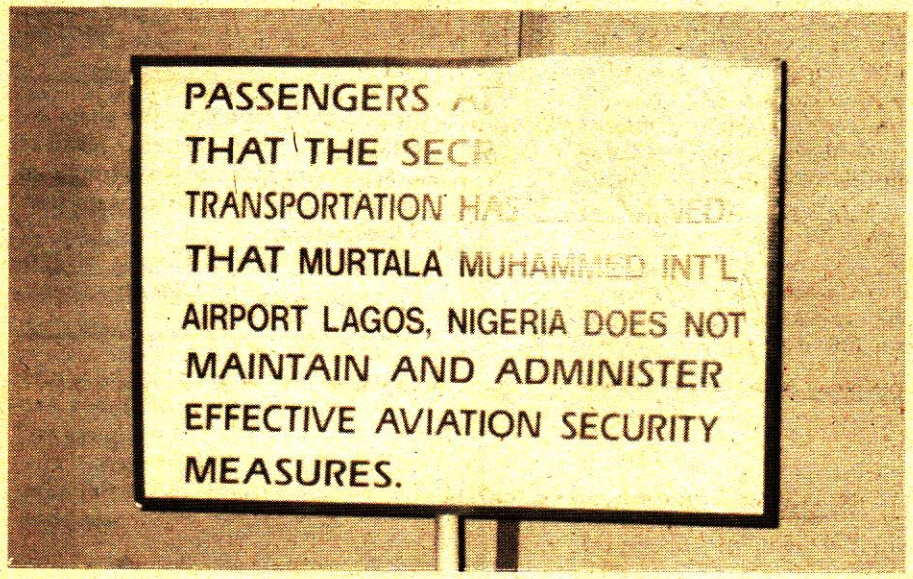
Yam sellers in Nigeria can get better prices in Cotonou, Yaounde or London for their produce than they get in local markets. To that extent, they too are subsidising the local consumers.

—Sam Aluko on the proposed removal of petroleum subsidy.

Idle Secretary

It is easy to accuse the Americans of not loving Nigeria. There is a catalogue of evidence gathered by Nigerians themselves. One has just landed on our laps. Kaycee Ejiogu, a Nigerian who lives in the United States, is a camera buff. He likes to take photographs of interesting things and places. And because SAP has not caught up with him, he does quite a bit of travelling by air in the US. Of course, he carries his camera along.

Not long ago, he stopped over at three airports Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale International both in Florida and San Francisco International, California. At each of these airports, Ejiogu noticed one thing: a sign with this rather unfriendly message: *Passengers are advised that the Secretary of Transportation has determined that Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, Nigeria, does not maintain and administer effective aviation security measures.* Ejiogu took out his camera in each case and recorded the message, seen here, for Nigeria's and the world to see.



Unfriendly message at Jacksonville Airport

He thinks it is evidence, incontrovertible evidence, that the Americans love to spread bad news about Nigeria. And he wonders why "our country should be portrayed in such a shameful manner in front of the enlightened world."

We too wonder why. But unlike Ejiogu, just to show you what we know of diplomacy, we don't think that his photograph can be sustained as evidence that the Americans hate our country. It is evidence that the American government does not want Americans to suffer the inconveniences of helpful touts at the airport. In truth, though, we don't know what the Americans are referring to as aviation security measures. If they are referring to the niggling matter of pilfering, evidence of mere leakage in the security of our airports, we have news for them. Their secretary of transportation is an idle man.

Cloth Maketh The woman

In new breed journalese, the presidential election train is moving to its final station. The SDP presidential candidate, Moshood Abiola, you know by now, believes in deploying all his resources, human, financial and material (e.g. posters) in fighting this ultimate of all ultimate battles for the ultimate of all ultimate political offices. He pressed his wives and children into service. Each of his grown up sons has a big job to do to ensure he beats Bashir Tofa on June 12. So does each of his three wives. He zoned the country into three north, east and west and assigned each zone to each of his wives. Their duty is to mobilise their fellow women to vote for their husband.

We have heard some uninformed political analysts say that this development of his ever-lovings is a clever way by the chief to sort out the rather complicated matter of who becomes the first lady if he wins the election. If they are to be believed, whoever mobilises more women will get the coveted number two position in the presidential family. Nonsense, says our authoritative source. Untrue.

It had better be because from what we hear, one of the wives is making some women really angry, thus jeopardising the possibility of her pre-eminent position. you do know that clothes are important to women. Those handling the Abiola campaign know that too. So they ordered some clothing materials with Abiola's

photograph printed on them. The leading SDP women reason that to woo and win more women, these materials should be given out free. The chief's wife in question disagrees. She says the clothing materials should be sold for 250 Naira per piece. One SDP woman from Benue State was so angry over this matter that she flew all the way, as if around the world, from Makurdi to Lagos to tell Bola Tinubu, a senator, to tell Abiola that the consequences of forcing the women to pay for the materials would be...well, women umbrage.

We also here (yes because, like Chris Okojie, we don't allow grass to grow in our ears) that some of the party faithful are not too happy either with the role Abiola's sons are playing in the campaign. These stalwarts, veterans of several political battles with battle scars to show for them, believe the young men should take the back seat and let the experienced hands do what experienced hands do in politics - run the campaign. Nonsense, say sources close to the sons. Was the philosophy of this transition programme not to elevate eaglets into position of leadership

From the Editorial Suite

DURING THE GOVernment of Olusegun Obasanjo, between 1976 and 1979, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, major-general, was the No 2 man. In his capacity as the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, he often met with the editors of the nation's media, briefing them on government policies under consideration and government policies under execution. Editors also had the opportunity of informing him frankly what the masses out there thought, what they felt, about the policies. In these sessions Yar' Adua impressed most of the editors on his grasp of the issues in contention. Many times we didn't agree with him but we admired the way he handled the issues. His pronunciation may confuse you but you couldn't fail to notice that he had a sharp, analytical mind.

His term came to an end as Obasanjo handed over to a civilian president. Yar'Adua became a businessman, shipping magnate and newspaper publisher. Then 1983 coup that sent the civilians scampering in various directions. Yar'Adua started travelling round the country, renewing friendships, making new friends, gathering the feathers for his political nest. At the time the lid on partisan politics was still firmly in place, he was visible in several parts of the country. It was no surprise to many that as soon as the gong went, Yar'Adua was one of the first politicians to hit the road. He soon found that he was one of those decreed out of political office - and into detention. And when he and the other heavyweight detainees came out they took the place by storm. He became a candidate, one of the army of candidates, of the SDP. He won, or so it appeared miraculously breaking into taboo territories such as the West. But the rest you know.

Since then Yar'Adua has been a formidable force, in fact the force in the SDP, and one of the few really powerful men outside the government. The SDP conference in Jos revolved round him. He held the ace, the joker. Everyone needed his nod to get anywhere. That's how powerful he has been.

We in *Newswatch* have tried since 1986 to get him to grant the magazine an interview. It has not been possible. And even after Theophilus Danjuma had come to the summit and given Yar'Adua a verbal battering (*Newswatch* November 2, 1992) last year we still found it difficult to get Yar'Adua to break his silence.

However, pressure pays. Soji Akinrinade, executive editor, who has been bothering Chris Mamman, Yar'Adua's public relations consultant, about the interview resumed the pressure recently. Friday May 21, 1993 Yar'Adua was at the *Newswatch* office, fielding questions at the summit on various subjects: Babangida, Abiola, Kingibe, Atiku, Kaduna mafia, etc. In the interview his experience in handling questions from the press showed through. He proved that if he's known for having a grip on power, he can also be said to have a grip on issues. The cover.

Ray Ekpu

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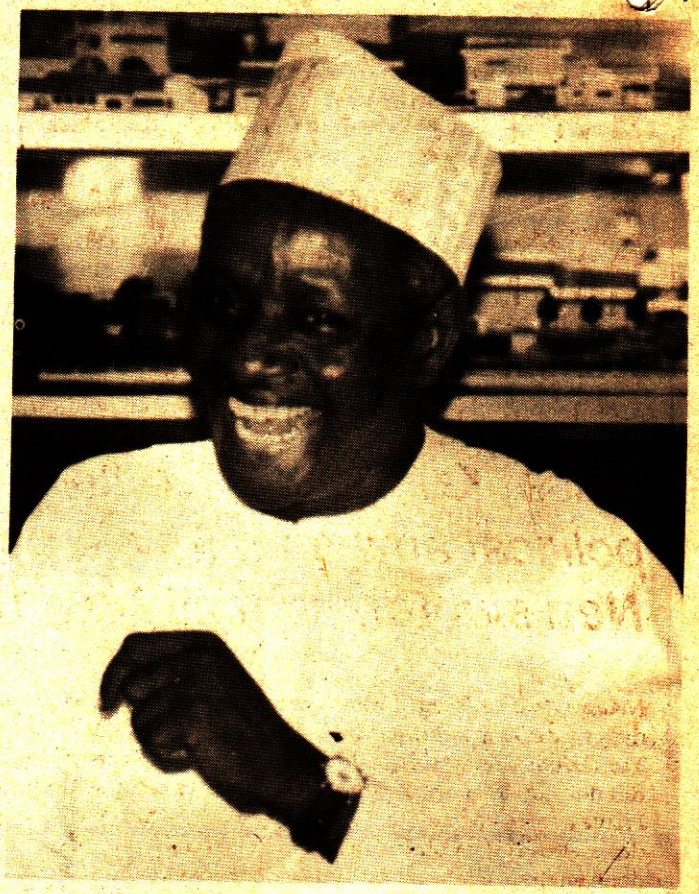
The Bridge Builder

By Wale Akin Aina



Photos by Matthew Faji

SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA, A RETIRED MAJOR-general and former chief of staff, supreme headquarters arrived *Newswatch* in unbelievable modesty: a beige kaftan, a pair of slippers and a cap. Nothing seemed to give away the man who was once the number two in the nation's hierarchy. Nothing appeared to show him as the one who built and steered a formidable political machine that swept through two presidential primaries last August. There were no telling signs that the man is considered the czar of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, whose quiet authority can hardly be discountenanced. Slim with delicate features and a spartan outlook, he could easily be lost in a crowd.

But opinions have been formed, regarding his person and his politics: A schemer, a silent manipulator, a billionaire with vaulting ambition, quiet but overbearing. For almost five hours, Musa Yar'Adua tore down pre-conceived notions and re-moulded them, brick by brick.

Born 50 years ago in Katsina, Katsina State, Yar'Adua was educated at the Government Secondary School, Katsina. He then proceeded to the Nigerian Military Training College, Kaduna and thence to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, U.K He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1964. In July 1975 when the Gowon administration was overthrown , Yar'Adua became a member of the Supreme Military Council in General Murtala Muhammed's regime. When Muhammed was assassinated in an abortive coup February 13, 1976, Yar'Adua, then a lieutenant colonel was promoted Brigadier and made Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters the number two man to General Olusegun Obasanjo who succeeded Muhammed. When the military handed over power to the second republic civilian administration of Shehu Shagari October, 1979, Yar'Adua retired from the army and went into business; farming, shipping, banking and newspaper publishing.

It was in the army that he developed his ideals and his politics. Having done all his schooling in the north and served his entire military career in the south, he said he had the "distinct advantage" of realising that myths and prejudices between notherners and southerners were imaginary, that they were encouraged "over the years for political gains." They were "created by the elites for one reason or the other... people were lying about each other."

This set him to the task of breaking down ethnic barriers and building bridges across two untrusting regions.

Has he succeeded? Perhaps. During the August presidential primaries, Yar'Adua won overwhelmingly in Oyo, Oshun, and Lagos. He beat Lateef Jakande, a former governor of Lagos State on his turf. This was by no means a miracle. He insists he won through hard work by him and his supporters who shared his ideals. "We made history," he told the editors.

Again, history was repeated at the Jos convention of the SDP last month, where with Yar'Adua's support, Moshood Abiola emerged the party's presidential candidate. "For the first time, we were able to go to the middle of the north... Abiola knows that he won with the full support of the west and the next support came from the north... During my primaries a bridge was built, during the Jos convention, the bridge was cemented," he enthused.

Yar'Adua is a practical man He believes Nigerians should exercise a lot of patience and understanding for the man who becomes president in the third republic. The structures laid down by the present administration, he argued, are weak, built on the faulty premise of the military trying to teach politicians how to play politics. He foresees a lot of problems for the country in the future due to this fundamental error in judgment and believes the intervention of the Almighty was necessary to get the country going:

Newswatch: Are you sceptical that we may not hold elections?
Yar' Adua: Even the lights are off (power goes off)
Newswatch: Are you sceptical?
Yar' Adua: Let me put it this way. My view is that we do need the intervention of the Almighty.
Newswatch: Why such emphasis on the Almighty? Why so much cynicism around August 27?
Yar'Adua: What is cynical about asking God for help?

Yar'Adua comes away as a visionary and one who is much misunderstood. He seems fired by ideals, because he believes those ideals would make a better country. For him, power should not be sought for its own sake but for the constructive purpose of nation building. ■

My Mission In Politics

SDP kingpin and disqualified presidential aspirant, Shehu Musa Yar' Adua, a retired major-general, speaks on his political ambition, Abiola and the transition programme at ***Newswatch*** *summit May 18, 1993*

Newswatch: Let's start from where you are now. Since when did you develop interest in becoming president of this country.

Yar' Adua: This is really a difficult question in terms of time. I did develop interest to participate in politics because I believe I have a lot to contribute. There were things which were being done, even in the political field which I thought could be better done. In the process, my attitude to it has always been I'll try to build something; try to sell something and that if what I have to sell, ideas and so on, are viable, if you buy them, if in that process, either me or anybody who has bought those ideas happens to be lucky enough to become president I would be thankful to God that these ideas would be treated. As a matter of fact, people were getting surprised that I continued in politics even after, let me say, after we were kicked out. It was for the ideas. As long as the ideas were there, it does not really matter who gets there. So I cannot really say what time I did develop interest to become president. Really, as a matter of fact, as you know, there is a group that I associate with, within the SDP. Actually it was the leadership of this group who in fact, when I was unbanned, asked me to contest the presidential primaries on behalf of the group. Even after they said so, it took me time before I was able to reply.

Newswatch: One of the surprises people had was that you were in government from 1975 to 1979 and whatever ideas you had to contribute then, you had an opportunity.

Yar' Adua: No. Going back to our government, from 1975 to 1979, when we came, we did say clearly what our problems were, why we were in the government. And as you might recall, the central, the cardinal programme of that government was to work out (a transition programme) and handover to a democratically elected government, which we did. I went into that government as an army officer and if you recall, as at that point, when the constituent assembly was sitting, we were being asked to work out an ideology for this country using our position in government. As the Chief of Staff, then, I did say that it was not the responsibility of the military to work out a political ideology for the country. That at that time, our responsibility was to take the country back to democracy and then allow those, the practitioners of politics, to develop an ideology themselves.

I do not think you can give ideology by decrees. I was always convinced that the military is not placed to give this

Photos by Matthew Faji

country a political ideology. It is left to the political class to do so. So I went into politics, because I have ideas which I know would have been wrong to have used the military ram down the nation's throat. What is right is that if I have ideas, I should go into politics. So the fact that I served in government earlier on, is enough reason to say that if I have political ideas, I should not try to sell those ideas. And in any case, I spent four years in government. It is not enough to say I had an opportunity. Yes I had an opportunity to serve in government but I had no opportunity to be a politician.

Newswatch: You think these ideas are better articulated in a civilian setting?

Yar' Adua: It is not just sheer articulation. You can articulate ideas by merely writing them in a book. What I'm saying is that if you're coming to government to prove the military is a corrective regime; if you say that you're there for corrective purposes, I think you should try to correct and leave. The essence of saying that a country should be either socialist, this or so, should be left to the political class. Not to ram it down. If the country accepts it, fair enough. But the military, as the military then or now, we do not have the right to say that this is a political ideology that this country should follow. Whether a military officer is in government, he should not use that opportunity to ram, to build ideologies for countries. What I am saying, that even a military officer who feels that he has an idea which he thinks is good for the country, he should leave the military and sell that idea where it ought to be sold; join the political class and sell it.

Yes, I had an opportunity to serve in government, but I had no opportunity to be a politician

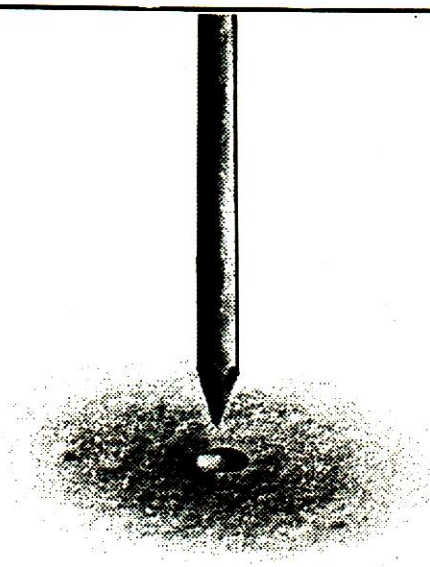
Newswatch: It does not look like you are necessarily dogmatic about this view because one would expect that a military that has already built the two political parties would have enjoyed your support to the extent that you want to participate in the political process and even lead one of the political parties.

Yar' Adua: No. That the military decreed two political parties, I would like to submit that if you now look at the two political parties, if you read their constitution, they got exactly the same thing. If you read their manifesto, except for a play in semantics, they have got really, exactly the same manifesto. They say slightly to the left or slightly to the right, of what? Now whether I agree with the decreeing of these two political parties or not, I feel that at such and such a time, if I have something to sell, I have to use whatever legitimate vehicle that is there to try and sell it. I joined the SDP, not because of the constitution of the party, or necessarily the manifesto, because I know it was not the members of the party that wrote the two. It was more like looking at the two parties and from the type of people who are in these parties looking at them as individuals, which ones do I feel their ideas are identical or are nearer to my own. So I said to myself, I will join this group of people, because our ideas are either identical or near. And at the same time, as of now, these are the only two legitimate vehicles that you can use to try to sell whatever political ideas you have. So if I were to say that because I do not agree with the military creating them, therefore I will not participate, I was not going to be allowed to form a political party and I would have had no opportunity whatsoever, so that's why I participated.

Newswatch: I think we can take it that it is not too long ago that you actually went into partisan politics and judging by your performance in the presidential primaries one was surprised by how much support you were able to muster throughout the campaigns. Can we have an idea how you went about this? Beating people like Jakande, is something like a miracle.

Yar' Adua: Well, I do not know about a miracle. But I know about two things. Ideas and hardwork. Now I am not going to philosophise. My ideas were simple because I used to be a simple soldier. So I know that whatever you want to sell, you must reduce it to the simplest form for people to understand and see whether they accept it or not. We started as group of friends. We believed in three cardinal principles which will sell and they are not that complicated to start with. These are one: we would not play tribal politics; not only that, we would not play it but we will fight it. Two: Ditto religious politics. It is not enough to say you are not going to play it. But you are going to fight it. The third might look similar but it it is not. We will fight geographical politics within the country. From the first republic to the second republic, parties were regionally based. If you were a northerner, for example, and you were not a member of the NPC or NPN, you were seen as a betrayer of the north and so on. Ditto, if you were a Yoruba and you were not in Action group or UPN, you were also accused of the same thing. So we also said we must fight this. In fact, what we said is that we just free the minds of our people from this political siege mentality, so that we would be able to associate freely on the basis of the fact that, say a Hausa/Fulani agrees with the ideas of a Yoruba, therefore, he should be able to associate freely without making the Hausa/Fulani feel that he is betraying anything or the Yoruba feel that he is betraying anything. And we started this in 1987 and we thought of the three basic principles that if we solved this as we go along, the circle would start getting larger and larger. So when we talk about Lagos or Oyo for example, a lot of the people there were not just supporting me as a person, they were supporting these ideas, because they now agree and accepted that there is no reason on earth why they should not fight to support anybody who actually shares these ideas with them.

And in spite of the abuses, they believed they were doing the right thing and they went ahead and did it. And in the same way, for example, when the same group of Yorubas presented Abiola to us, that we too have a candidate, our question to them



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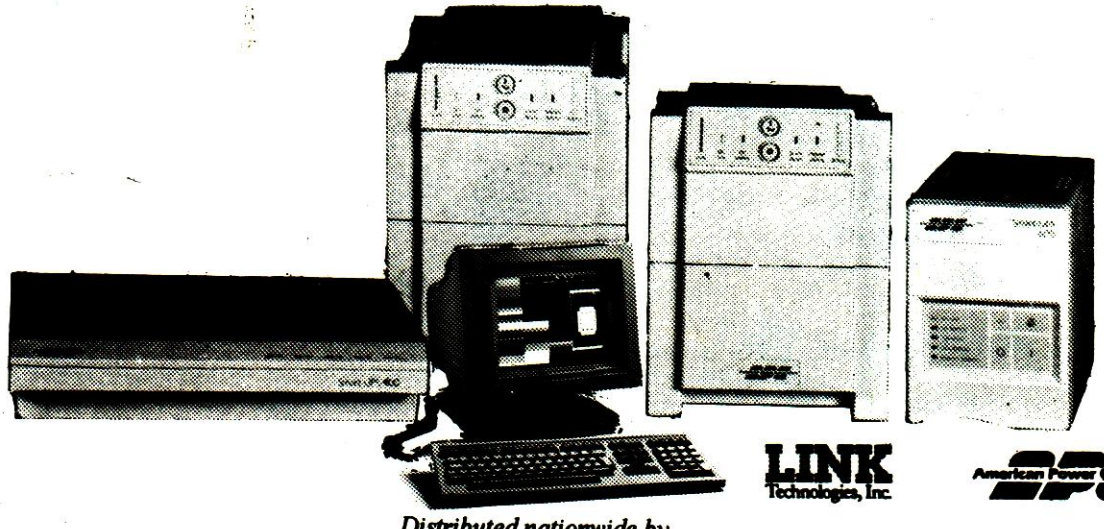

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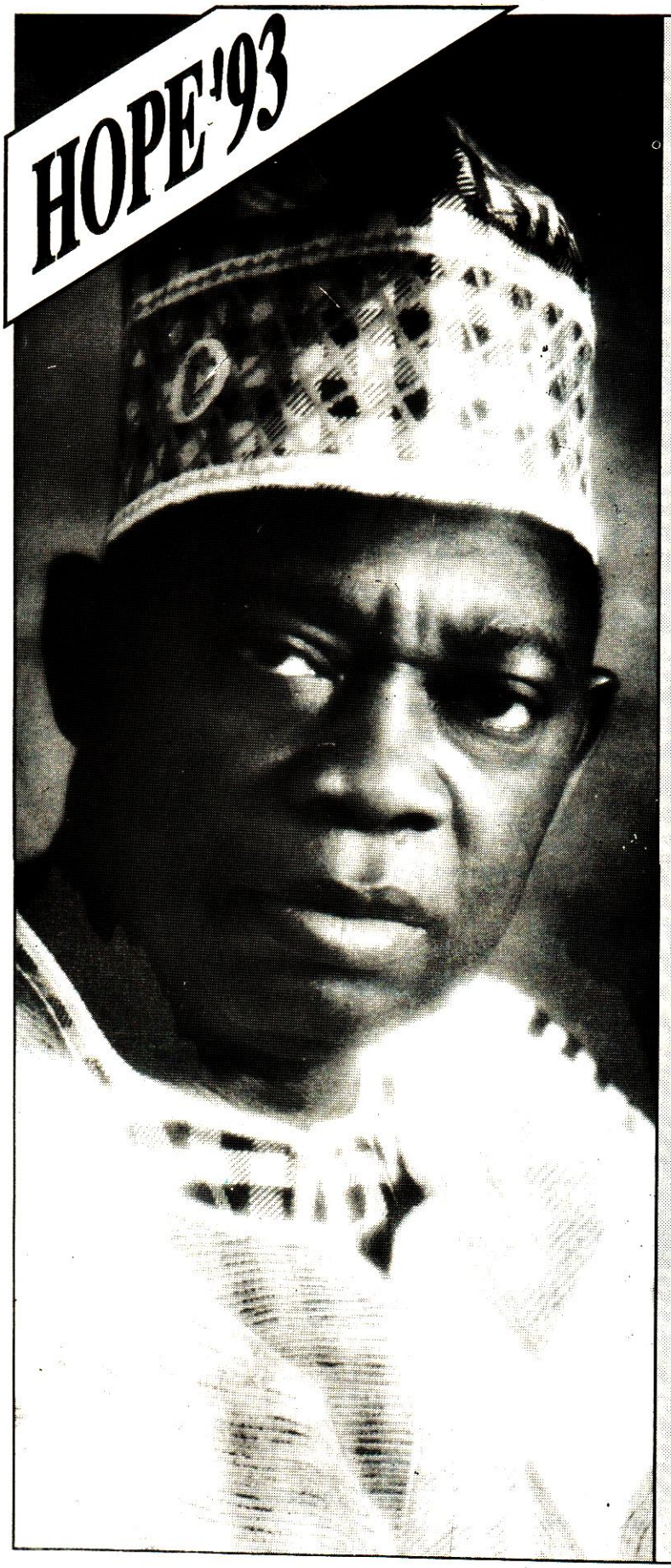

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is that have you put our ideas to this candidate, and they said they did. Well, if you are sure that you did, we are then able also to get people from the north who said it is alright, they would support him. And I think that was really the secret of the success and the amount of hardwork that went into it, not by me alone, but by a lot of people who actually believe in us. And I think we put in more work than probably anybody else.

Newswatch: Does that explain the grip that you have on the SDP to the extent that the entire society now sees you as the godfather of the party?

Yar' Adua: Yes that explains the grip that the group as a group has.

Newswatch: Which group?

Yar' Adua: You know that in every political party in the world, it does not matter, it is not just SDP, there have to be some interests. You have a general concept of what you want, but within general concept you have some people who share some specific interest. It is these people within the SDP who actually share, who are prepared, and they come from all parts of the country, that is the beauty of it, who are prepared for these principles and for a change. Most of the people are basically young, when I say young from 30 to 45 to 50. A lot of them are professionals in their various fields who do not see politics as their means of livelihood and therefore can actually work on what they believe in. A lot of them are lawyers, engineers, what have you. I am a politician, but I do not depend on politics for my livelihood. So what the group believes in is constant. If they go to any election, they are prepared to work for people who they believe would develop those ideas.

Newswatch: Are you supporting Abiola?

Yar' Adua: Yes

Newswatch: Why then are they still sending governors to you and why haven't you come out to start campaigning for him, for people to see that you are supporting him?

Yar' Adua: Actually, I don't know why they are sending governors to me. I didn't see the governors by the way. I read it in the newspapers, in *Punch* myself, so I didn't see them, so if they had come, I didn't know what it was that they were coming to discuss. But I did say to the presidential candidate that, I read this in *Punch* and that I took objection to it. And he said that he had a meeting with the governors and that he did not know if what was published in the *Punch* was what was decided, because he left them at some point in time and it must have been because he was not there. He told me that if what was printed in *Punch* was what they were going to do, if he had been there, he would have told them that it was unnecessary. And his running mate was there when I said I took objection to it, and Baba said to me quite clearly that he was there when the decision was taken, but what came out in the *Punch* was not what the governors were supposed to come and do. He said they were discussing that during the campaign there was something missing. That a lot of the elders of the party were not being seen when they go round the states and it was in the content of discussing that, that they suggested that they should get some governors to come and talk to me and probably a few other elders to ask whether the elders were annoyed that is why they are not turning up.

I think part of the problem is that, up-till now, there seems to be a total confusion. Some people believe that all the disqualified presidential aspirants are not allowed to participate. But some believe they are allowed to participate. And I think it started from Jos when the party gave a written invitation to the elders of the party and quite a number of them were former presidential aspirants who had been disqualified, to attend the convention as observers. I didn't go. Most of them went and they were sitting in the stadium when an announcement was made on the public address system that they should leave because they were not supposed to be there.

I told them to write to NEC and let it clarify this issue because it is causing confusion. Some people believe that if they go, it might harm the ticket because they believe they are not supposed to be there. Some are saying no, no, no, you're not disqualified from participating in politics, you are disqualified from contesting elections.

I believe that I am more responsible for his (Abiola) becoming the SDP candidate than any body else

Newswatch: Does that account for why you are not out campaigning?

Yar' Adua: I am not the only one. Is Jakande out doing it? Have you seen Falae doing it or Saraki, or somebody? It's just because my name attracts a lot of things. There is basically that confusion. I might go and end up by getting them disqualified.

Newswatch: When did the party write to NEC?

Yar' Adua: The party is writing NEC this week

Newswatch: If NEC says alright, would you go ahead and campaign for him?

Yar' Adua: Who told you I am not campaigning for him? (laughter).

Newswatch: Since we are on Abiola, your relationship with him, from the little we know has been characterised by the sweet and bitter kind of thing. Are things very normal now?

Yar' Adua: At least some of these questions should probably be put to Abiola. But I believe that I am more responsible, as an individual, for his becoming the SDP candidate than anybody else. If I don't like the man why should I help him to be the party's candidate?

Newswatch: I thought your candidate was Atiku Abubakar

Yar' Adua: You have not been following what the party has been doing (laughter). You know clearly that Atiku didn't quite participate in the final ballot.

Newswatch: Since you're here now, you can as well give a clear account of what actually happened.
Yar' Adua: In relation to what?

Newswatch: In relation to Atiku and Abiola; why did Atiku withdraw?
Yar' Adua: Atiku withdrew, for his reasons. To help his party's unity, to allow people to contest so that we develop a clear winner. But there were two people involved, Atiku and Abiola: I would like you to ask anyone of them what happened between the two of them.

Newswatch: Can you tell us the much you know?
Yar' Adua: Yes the much I know, I did say I helped Abiola to become the party's candidate. He knows I helped him. His colleagues in the west know I helped him.

Newswatch: But you gave a condition, that your choice should be his running mate and that he must be a Hausa/Fulani muslim.
Yar' Adua: No. I did not give a condition that he must take a Hausa/Fulani muslim. But I supported Atiku for the ticket of a running mate, yes. I supported the fact that Abiola should take a Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri as a running mate. Amongst the arguments that went on, whether he should take a christian or a muslim, I advised Abiola and when we met at the party elders meeting at the various caucuses, I did say it. I saw Abiola's ticket as an issue of ethnic balancing not so much a religious balancing. And my arguments were simple and straight forward. If anybody can puncture them, fine. I said, as far as I know there are five major groupings in this country and just about anybody fits into one of these five. There is the Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri; the northern minorities, the Yorubas, the Igbos and the southern minorities. So I said in SDP, there are also five major positions that people want to see balanced. The president, the vice-president, the senate president, the speaker and the party chairman. The Igbos have got the speaker in the house, the southern minorities have got the chairman of the party, the northern minorities have got the senate president, the Yorubas have got a presidential candidate.

So, there is only one position left and there is only one group left that do not have anything within the SDP. That is the Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri axis. So it is clear that in this group whichever way one looks at it, if you like fortunately or unfortunately, in this group, 98 percent of the people are muslims. At one point I was asked, can't we get a Hausa/Fulani, christian? I said you cannot ask a christian to represent a group of people who are more than 95 percent muslims. And this was the argument I presented. And therefore I said look, the Igbos and the Yorubas should stop looking at this ticket as a religious balancing because there is no way, because we are in a federation, there is no way you can ask a whole part of the country to feel fully committed to SDP if out of these five positions they don't have any one of them. And there isn't much room to manoeuvre because the four positions have already gone. And I supported that on that basis. But I did not give it to him as a condition that, ah, if he is chosen he must have a muslim. At one time, he was considering christians and there was argument both for and against. And I still think that looking at all the arguments that he made the right decision.

Newswatch: How true was it that you collected N300 million in order to prevail on Atiku to step down for Abiola?
Yar' Adua: If anybody tells you that I ever received a kobo from Abiola in order to support him or do anything for him, I tell you it's a blatant lie. If anything, so far I have spent my money for his ticket both before he became a candidate and now. And nobody in SDP or this country has ever given me a kobo to support him for anything, including Abiola. And I know I can answer on his behalf that Abiola has never given Atiku a penny, up till now that I am talking to you and Atiku has never asked him for a penny, so I don't know where the rumours of money, N300 million and so on is coming from. There is no way you can pass N300 million without 20 odd people knowing about it. You have to pass it through banks and things like that. There is no way you can even cover the movement. But it is a lie anyway.

Kingibe is my friend. He has been my friend. I am not fighting Baba. He is not fighting me either

Newswatch: You supported Abiola for the presidential ticket, you supported Atiku for the vice-presidential ticket. What was your stand on Kingibe when he contested as presidential candidate and when he was being considered as running mate?
Yar' Adua: Kingibe is my friend. He has been my friend. And there was a lot of talks that we were fighting. I am not fighting Baba. He is not fighting me either. But I think people completely missed the issue, I have a right to support Baba or not to support him, our personal relationship notwithstanding. And the fact that I supported Atiku for the running mate, it was unfortunate that Atiku did not get it, that doesn't mean that because he didn't get it then I will not support the ticket. It is like Kingibe. Suppose he is not the running mate, would he have fought against the ticket, because he stood as a presidential candidate and lost?

Newswatch: There is a particular reason why the rumour is rife. It is said that his report on the party presidential primaries last year was part of the reason that was used in disqualifying all of you. And that you find it difficult to forgive him, as you think he stabbed you in the back.
Yar' Adua: No. In the first place, if there is such a report I didn't see it. So that is out. But like I said, I went through primaries and I stood those primaries on certain fundamental principles; that this country is one and that whatever we are doing, we must think of the people as people, as Nigerians. I believe that I sold that idea. I believe that such an idea was accepted. I went through the primaries. I won the primaries in the western states;

the Yoruba area. And I believe that me and the people that supported me, made history on that occasion, not just for the sake of making it, but because we wanted to change the face of Nigerian politics. There is no reason on earth why, because I did not support a northerner, people should start saying, it was because I quarrelled with him.

We also made another history. For the first time, we were able to go to the middle of the north, that is Jos, and Abiola knows that he won that primary or convention with the full support of the west and the next support came from the north. We wanted to build a bridge. We wanted to make this country feel that people can vote for each other. The only problem that I see when people start talking about all these is that people find it difficult to believe that there are in Nigeria people who would work on their conviction, not on tribal grounds. To me that is more important an individual, than my personal relationship with an individual.

During my primaries, a bridge was built; during the Jos convention, the bridge was cemented. And I am saying that whatever people outside might think, to me there are certain principles that are much more important than just individual relationship. I am not saying that Baba Kingibe is no longer my friend. I didn't say that Baba has done anything to me. These were speculations people were making. But I thought that the building of the bridge and the cementing of that bridge is much more important. Even without my support, Baba could have won. Abiola has won, fine. By the grace of God, if he becomes president, for four years or eight years, good. He was genuine and he accepted our ideals of no ethnic politics. That is what is going to last. When people talk about my wanting, to be president in 1997, that does not bother me.

Newswatch: The bridge you are talking about, breaking down barriers; would it be right to say that that was the idea you had when you supported Awo in 1983?

Yar' Adua: If you want to know, believe me, this idea of building bridges I had it even before I ever went into government in 1975. You see probably because I had a distinct advantage of having spent all my schooling life in the north, and having spent all my military career in the south. I never served for one single day in the north throughout my military career. From the day I got commissioned, I served all my military life here in the south. That is why, probably, I have that advantage and therefore, I knew, even before I went into government that a lot of the prejudices that the northerner has for the southerner do not exist. They are just imaginary prejudices, built over the years for political gains. Also a lot of the prejudices southerners have for northerners do not exist. I knew that those things were things people built deliberately. And I think anybody who actually thinks about it knows that it doesn't exist.

There was never any quarrel between the ordinary Nigerians. If there were, you would find out it was created by the elites for one reason or the other. So I always believed that we have created and we would continue to create artificial barriers which ought not to be there because people were lying about each other. Therefore I have always believed that these barriers can be broken because they were artificially created for somebody else's purposes, not for the good of the people who are being made to believe in these barriers.

And check this out. During my time in the military, when I was in government, out of it, and I still believe and I work towards it, I tried in my own way to work towards it. And I know at times I had to take decisions which I personally knew would hurt me as a person. But I also believe that some people have to make sacrifices.

A lot of prejudices that the northerner has for the southerner do not exist. They are imaginery, built over the years for political gains

Newswatch: When you were talking about a group in SDP, whose leadership invited you to be an aspirant, you spoke of the group as not having politics as a career. That looks like what we term Kaduna mafia to me. It looks like it has succeeded in establishing that kind of thing nation-wide. What role has this Kaduna group played in this kind of set up?

Yar' Adua: I have said this before, so often, in so many interviews that I do not know of any existence of any Kaduna mafia. There again, people were saying the mafia was there to protect northern interests. But let me say that if any group exists in this country whose main aim and objective is to break ethnic barriers, to try to bring our people together, if that is a mafia, I think it is a good mafia (laughter).

Newswatch: We are not looking at mafia negatively because the description you gave of this larger group also fits the kind of description that we have of the so called Kaduna mafia.

Yar' Adua: Simply because I said they have their professions?

Newswatch: Umaru Shinkafi, former NSO boss, mentioned your name as a member of the Kaduna mafia and that the Kaduna mafia waxed stronger during the Obasanjo/Yar' Adua regime, because there was a links man and you were that links man, you helped to project their ideas into the government.

Yar' Adua: What role was he playing in the mafia himself?

Newswatch: I don't know (laughter)

Yar' Adua: No. You see when I said to you that a lot of the people were not professional politicians, I mean, a number of them you

know, quite a number of them are your friends. Dabo for instance, would you say he is a professional politician? He is a politician anyway, a damn good one, but what I mean by professional politician is that there are people whose only job is politics and they live on it. Therefore this kind of people find it very difficult to work on principles and ideals. On the other hand, if the third republic politics is allowed to function properly, for the first time, we have a lot of people with professional leanings, who are not dependent on politics, in fact who actually contributed, either intellectually or financial. It is much easier for this class of people to work towards ideals that can build.

Newswatch: The picture one gets of you is the picture of a selfless man. But then when General Danjuma came here, the picture he presented was of somebody who manipulates, of somebody who does things when it suits him or to suit himself. That was the picture that we got. The things is how do we reconcile the pictures?

Yar' Adua: But I don't see what your problem is in reconciling because when I was Chief of staff, I worked under General Obasanjo. I was his number two man and if I'm going to have a confidential report on me, he is the only person that has the right to say that this is what he thought of me. That is one. Two, I'm sure Danjuma was not the only officer that I worked with that expressed opinion on me. If you read General Oluleye's book, he has expressed opinion on me. Now Oluleye is somebody I worked under. I was his brigade commander. He has expressed opinion on me. Joe Garba has expressed opinion on me. To a certain extent, General Obasanjo expressed opinion on me in some of his writings. If you read some of the things George Innih has written, he has expressed opinion. There are a lot of officers whom I worked with closely who have expressed opinion on me. Take all these opinions and see whether they agree with what General Danjuma said. General Bali has expressed opinion on me. Look at it, does that agree with what General Danjuma said. I did not reply General Danjuma because he was my senior officer and I still respect him. There are ethics which I am not prepared to break.

I did not reply General Danjuma because he was my senior officer and I still respect him. There are ethics which I am not prepared to break

Newswatch: There is a reason why I asked that question. He then said for instance when Obasanjo was asked to do something, he consulted with people and then arrived at a decision. Like for instance, Obasanjo consulted with people before picking board chairmen. But when you were asked to do the same thing, you did not consult anybody, in fact it was from a particular place in Katsina that you picked people.

Yar' Adua: I don't know where that came from or did not come from. But what one would have thought is that since he was talking about an action taken in government, there were other members. During our time, board chairmen and board members were not considered important enough. It was not a Supreme Military Council matter. It never was, it was purely a Federal Executive Council issue. And the names of those who were going to be board chairman and so on were never given by me or General Obasanjo. They were given by commissioners from their various ministries. During our time, if you recall, when we took over from Gowon, all those who were serving in various boards were allowed, we didn't go to kick them out. We allowed each board tenure of office to expire according to the law setting that institution up. Lucky enough, they were appointed about the same time, so their time expired around the same time.

Now the practice then was that each commissioner, for any parastatal or board within his ministry, should make recommendations for every board. Because we were doing it at the same time, we said they should bring all their recommendations and these would be harmonised. And this was done. And the reason was quite clear. All we did was to give guidelines. Like you cannot be chairman of two boards. And this was done. But you will appreciate that when you are dealing with about 100 boards, for example, if you were minister of transport, at the time you're making your recommendations, you can't know what the minister of finance was recommending. And he in turn wouldn't know what the minister of petroleum was recommending. So if you're not careful, unless you harmonise them somewhere, we may have the minister of transport recommending me as chairman of railways. If you take yours separately, then the following day, there might come, say the minister of finance would recommend me as chairman of Union Bank. So what we did was to look at all these and harmonise them.

I did not even sit while it was being harmonised because it was a civil service job. And the only guidelines which General Obasanjo gave, and myself, was if say a person had been inadvertently recommended say for three positions from three different ministries, he should be given one. And when they finished everything, if there were still vacancies, they were filled. It was not the commissioners' fault. They would only recommend people they knew and you will find a lot of people knowing about the same people and recommending them, because they were doing it individually. So as a commissioner, you might have put my name as chairman of railways like I said but at the end of the exercise, I might have ended up being chairman of Union Bank simply because the commissioner for finance had also recommended me. So you may take on somebody else that you may not have recommended from your ministry ending up to be chairman of railways, because probably he had been recommended for something else, somewhere. That was the extent I was involved in the exercise anyway. That is why I said it's

always better, because these things are on record. You can go and look at who were the board members, chairmen and so on.

Newswatch: Another example General Danjuma gave was that you were aspiring to be president and at the same time sponsoring your brother to be governor of Katsina State, and he thinks...

Yar'Adua: I wouldn't like us to go too much into what General Danjuma said or didn't say. In any case, at that point in time when the governorship was being contested, I was banned. At that point in time, I was completely banned from participating in politics anyway. So I couldn't be aspiring at that point in time, within the context of the law existing at that time. I couldn't even aspire to be a councillor.

Newswatch: Do you have good relations with Danjuma?

Yar'Adua: Oh, yes.

Newswatch: When you both were in the SMC?

Yar'Adua: Oh yes.

Newswatch: There were only three of you at the top. You, General Obasanjo and General Danjuma. You must have had some kind of interaction. How was it?

Yar'Adua: We had a very good relationship

Newswatch: Because there was one other thing he was talking about. When Obasanjo was chief of staff, when you had a meeting, the minutes of the meeting were ready the following morning. But that when you became chief of staff, the minutes would not be ready.

Yar' Adua: That's why you know... I had said earlier on that General Danjuma is my senior officer, and I don't want to go against our ethics and my own, I think you should have actually asked what meetings.

Newswatch: The SMC meetings

Yar' Adua: Now, neither myself nor General Obansajo was the secretary to the Federal Government. We did not take minutes of the SMC meeting. Those were the responsibility of the Secretary of the Federal Government. He was to take the minutes. And I do not know and nobody would say that at SMC meetings, minutes were not circulated as they would normally be circulated. And the person who normally took minutes at that level was the SFMG. It was his responsibility to ensure that whatever decisions were taken there were made known. There was a whole secretariat whose responsibility was to take minutes of SMC and so on and so forth. And generally, nobody less than a position of a permanent secretary was responsible.

Newswatch: Can we take you to your time and your transition programme and how it compares with this transition programme?

Yar' Adua: One of the main reasons of our ever going into government was to move this country into democracy. I'm sure you might have noted that that was in the first speech that the late General Murtala made as head of state. And in the shortest possible time, a programme of action was spelt out by him to the nation. If you look at that programme you will see that the cardinal issue of that programme was the movement towards democracy. And since there was a basic issue that those of us who were principally involved in that government believed, as one group, that what took us to government was to do principally this, bring the country to democracy, we believed that the military had no business running the country. We were honest about it. So when we drew up our programme there were certain things which we were not prepared to interfere with. We did not believe, like I said earlier, that it should be us telling the country what type of parties should be formed. We believed that the civilian population was better qualified in that area than we were. So what we did was to lay out the programme and the structures that were required to carry out the programme.

The engineers of the present programme decided to teach Nigerians how to play politics. That was the initial and first mistake

And we drew out laws, which we felt would enable the structures to function. We allowed the structures to function. For example, laws as regards the transition and so on, we made one on FEDECO. We never changed it. But we allowed people to challenge the law in court, if they wanted to. And they were challenged and we accepted what ever decision the courts gave. So we had minimal number of laws for the transition. And when I said we handed off, we handed off. And all we did as a government was, as far as the transition was concerned, once we set up the machinery, and we allowed the machinery to function, we then concentrated on the business of running the country. And our only concern was if there were problems, which any of the bodies that were set up to ensure this transition felt that government had to clear, we cleared them.

Newswatch: There is no way you can run away from comparing the motives and the methods. Your goals were very clear as you stated. How do you describe the current transition programme. You participated in it actively and you should give us your views.

Yar' Adua: I think probably the basic difference, in my view is that the engineers of the present programme, this time now have decided to take onto themselves the responsibility of teaching Nigerians how to play politics. And I think that was the initial or the first mistake made. And that mistake would continue to be made because it's like the other way round. If the civilians, for example, take over government, kicking the military out, not through the process of a ballot box, and then sit down to say, look you soldiers, this is how to run the army. I think nobody would be suprised, if at the end of the day, the army disintegrates. I think that is the first cardinal error. It shouldn't have been the responsibility of the military. It doesn't matter, whether it was going to take two years or five years or ten years. This is a programme, these are the structures, these are the laws guiding this programme. Within these laws and the various structures, go and form your parties, draw up your own constitutions, your own manifestoes and things like that. Develop. It's

the same, if the military today decides that it is going to teach and ensure that all magazines in Nigeria are run in accordance with the views of the military public relations officer, who is not a journalist, he probably doesn't know anything about the profession. I think shortly over a period of time, you might wake up to find no magazines on the streets at all.

So, I don't know what other thing, but I think this is the cardinal mistake. And once you make a fundamental error in trying to establish something you have to come back and admit that you made that mistake. But if you insist that a mistake has not been made and you continue, you're only going to continue to compound the problems. I think this is the basic mistake and the basic fundamental difference between our approach and that of this government.

Newswatch: But the president, General Babangida says he has reasons for doing what he is doing because your own handover was rushed. As such you didn't even care to whom you handed over to. That is why the country ran into problems. He says he now wants to establish a new political culture as distinct from what you did. As if you were in a hurry to leave the stage, so you didn't really ensure that what you were trying to build would endure. And he says that is what is directly responsible for this whole transition. How do you see his own assessment of your own hand over?

Yar' Adua: As I said, the whole thing is a matter of approach. As I said, we did not say we were going to teach Nigerians how to play politics, so that is the difference. Therefore, it didn't matter, whether we were to take two years or one year or whatever. We never played politics. How do you know at that point in time, the nitty-gritty of how parties were formed? On the other hand, if he believed that we made a mistake, he was a member of that government, a member of the Supreme Military Council when all those decision were taken. If he believed we made a mistake, we were not infallible. I remember that during our time, we were never scared to admit, even when we were in government, that a decision we took the previous day was a mistake.

If by the grace of God we have a democratic president, Nigerians should exercise a lot of patience because the structures as they are today are very weak

Now, I believe that it is evident that the two parties, the president himself has said so, even recently, that Nigerians have not learnt anything. That the politicians haven't learnt anything. Now if you decide that you are going to teach somebody something and after a number of years, you yourself say that he hasn't learnt anything, I think it's only natural, one should be man enough to find out where the fault is. Is it that the student is so daft that he can't learn and he will never learn. Is it that the teacher is not as good as he thinks he is. But both ways, there is something wrong somewhere. At least, if you admit that the student hasn't learnt anything, whichever way you look at it, there is a failure somewhere. If the student is daft, that is the only student you have. The Nigerian politicians are so daft that they can't learn anything, but these are the only politicians that Nigeria has. There is only one Nigeria so you are not going to import any new people from anywhere. So if you decide that the students are daft, if you are not going to admit students from anywhere, at least one would have to try another approach. So I think the issue of time has nothing to do with it. If it was meant as an experiment, I believe the experiment hasn't quite succeeded.

Newswatch: If the experiment has not succeeded, do you foresee disaster?

Yar' Adua: I don't think I will put it as strongly as that.

Newswatch: Then how do you see the future?

Yar' Adua: Well, I believe we will continue the way we are. This country has already got enough problems. I will put it this way. I don't think we are going to see the end of these problems soon. Yes, I foresee a lot of problems.

Newswatch: Problems in terms of politics or economy?

Yar' Adua: Yes. In any case one affects the other.

Newswatch: The problems foreseen, would they be resolved by us within this transition programme or they will continue to be with us.

Yar' Adua: That is a very difficult question. I believe that the economic problems, for example, are not basically the fault of the politicians, at least not the present ones. I believe that the political problems are also not their fault because the people are not being allowed to play politics in the way they should play it. Now that is one. Two: I believe that we need democracy to start looking at our problems without any fear and try to solve them. Now whether the structures which have been built up, not by politicians, but by the present government, are strong enough to enable us sustain democracy, I think that is the sort of question over which one just has to keep his fingers crossed and keep on praying. As I have always said, during my campaign, that business of running, putting this country on sound democratic footing is really the business of the political class. The military is merely, should merely administer the transition. The real transition to democracy will start when we have a democratic president.

So, I will merely end up by saying that, if by the grace of God we have our elections and again by His grace, we have a democratic president, the only plea is that Nigerians should please exercise a lot of patience. Because the structures as they are today are weak, very weak. And a lot of patience would be required from Nigerians, all Nigerians, irrespective of whatever profession, in business, in the military, in journalism. Whoever is there will require a lot of sympathy and a lot of patience from Nigerians. Because he will inherit structures that are very weak.

Newswatch: This "if by grace of God" the military disengages connotes a kind of scepticism. Are you sceptical he (IBB) may not go?

Yar' Adua: By whose grace?

Newswatch: I though he would leave by the grace of this government. Are you sceptical that we will not hold elections?

Yar' Adua: Even the lights are off (Power goes off)

Newswatch: Are you sceptical?

Yar' Adua: Let me put it this way. My view is that we do need the intervention of the Almighty.

Newswatch: Do you still hold the belief regarding what you said shortly after you were banned, that you doubted the sincerity of this administration.

Yar' Adua: I think that belief... well again you know that there is a decree (laughter). Why don't you leave it to we need the intervention of the Almighty. What's wrong with that? You don't want His intervention?

Newswatch: Why such emphasis on the Almighty, why so much cynicism around August 27.

Yar' Adua: What is cynical about asking God for help?

Newswatch: What's your relationship with the president

Yar' Adua: He is my friend, or at least I am his friend. As far as I know we are friends.

Newswatch: So how is your relationship, at the normal level?

Yar' Adau: Yes

Newswatch: Are you saying so even with your disqualification?

Yar' Adau: Yes

Newswatch: With the closure of your Newspaper and the arrest of your editor?

Yar' Adua: Yes

Newswatch: You talk with him?

Yar' Adua: Yes

Newswatch: What kind of thing do you discuss as friends?

Yar' Adua: That's not fair. How can you ask me what things I discuss with friends?

Newswatch: Did you discuss your disqualification?

Yar' Adua: No

Newswatch: You never mentioned it to him?

Yar' Adua: No

Newswatch: What did you feel when you were disqualified?

Yar' Adua: I have said what I felt. I felt I had been done in. But since I wasn't the only one.. well.

Newswatch: But you were the only one invited for a meeting (in Abuja), in which you were said to have gone through the back door.

Yar' Adua: If you are referring to that, I was not invited as such. And when I went, I did not see it as going to a meeting. Because I visited the president, my friend in his house, his office. So I went there, just one of the normal visits that I pay the president. I did not go there because I believed I was being invited to a meeting. It's a place I have been to so many times.

Newswatch: On this occasion, did he call you?

Yar' Adua: You see, let's not put too much emphasis on something which is normal. Over the period of his presidency I had spoken to him so many times on the telephone, so many times, I have said, look I want to come and see you. So many times, he has said come and see me. It didn't matter. Don't forget, this is a friend. He has been a friend for about 30 years.

Newswatch: It seems as if those who don't known him well are giving him all kinds of names, Maradonna, schemer, so forth. You who have known him sufficiently enough, how do you characterise the man, Ibrahim Babangida?

Yar' Adua: I think this interview is about me.

Newswatch: Yes, so how do you characterise him, what kind of man is he

Yar' Adua: I think by now, every Nigerian, especially where I am sitting (Newswatch), everybody can make his own judgment and since I have said he is my friend, I don't know if it is advisable to give judgment.

Newswatch: We don't mind

Yar' Adua: But I do

Newswatch: How rich are you, in terms of money?

I'm confortable, but believe me, I am not anywhere as rich as people think I am

Yar' Adua: I'm comfortable, but believe me I am not anywhere as rich as people think I am. Because I know what people think. I had so much money and things like that, I went through the primaries and bought people, everybody and so on. There are certain things, once people have their own perception it doesn't matter what you say anyway. And in any case from the point of view that people thought I could do anything. For example the primaries, I know, I do not think there was one aspirant either SDP or NRC who worked as much as 50 percent of what I did. In spite of the size of this country, from April to August (1992), I went round this country two times and I went by road. I didn't have that sort of money to be chartering aircraft. And you will find a large number of occasions, at two O'clock in the morning we were still on the road. God knows how many number of local governments I visited. That is to say that there isn't a single senatorial district in this country that I didn't visit. We took them by road and I was also lucky. When I started, I didn't start from the scratch, there were already people we made, in their own states, to work as hard as I was doing. There were places I have been to, during my campaign, just for the primaries that people said I was that first person ever, either seeking for the presidency or as president who had ever visited them. And that makes a lot of difference.

Yes, I am involved in a number of businesses and one thing I have, there is nothing any where in Nigeria or anywhere in the world which I own and does not have my name. Any business that I buy shares, everything I have, I buy in my name. If it is the one that does not have my name, it is not mine. I have nothing to do with it. There isn't a single house in this country which I

own which is not in my name, the certificate is not in my name. And what I don't do, when you're running for elections, you turn round and start asking for donations from people. It wasn't because I had more than enough money to finance my campaign or that I did not need money. Because I saw it as a total party issue and the time you start looking for donations is after you become a candidate. When you're doing something within your own party, if you're popular enough, it should be a test of your own respectability that party members are prepared to get up and work for you.

Newswatch: General Danjuma, here at the summit said we should ask you how you made your money. How did you make your money?

Yar' Adua: But you should have asked which money

Newswatch: The money that you have

Yar' Adua: If I say to you, how did you make your money, is like saying how did you buy your car, when you probably don't have a single car, how do you explain? I have just told you how I went about my campaign.

Newswatch: Did you get some funds from Saudi Arabia?

Yar' Adua: No

Newswatch: Did the president give you money to run your campaign?

Yar' Adua: (After a long pause) No

Newswatch: Why did you have to think about saying no?

Yar' Adua: The reason why I had to think about it; there are certain business I run which need permission from the the Federal Government. Fully legitimate businesses. If I asked the president for help and he did help and as a result, through that business I make something, that's why I hesitated. But whether he has taken cash, counted and given me, No. I could give you an example. Sometime, I imported beans from Niger republic. This is one of the major trade between Nigeria and Niger, because they still have a marketing board, an equivalent of what was the marketing board here. Now importation of food into Nigeria is not allowed unless if it comes from ECOWAS countries. To do that you need to have a special permission. A number of people and I normally apply to the ministry of finance, because this is where we get this permission from. The first time I applied, when the thing got stuck, I did ask the president as a friend, that look, I have applied for this, this is the problem, please can you help? He did help. In any case, a majority of those who applied got it anyway. The reason why I did that was because of the currency fluctuation. Normally people have just got to follow the normal procedure, which would take about three months. But you're given a price at the time you apply. And you only trade in naira. Since you may never know what the naira was going to be in three months, time, you don't want a situation where you get the permission by that time, the naira has depreciated to the point where the project will be a total loss, then you have to come back then go through the whole thing again. I made money out of it. That's why I hesitated. But I didn't go to him to say help me please, I am going to mak money to pay for campaigns.

I asked the president for help and he did help and as a result I make something. But whether he has taken cash, counted and given me. No

Newswatch: We are paralysed by the huge debt problem and some Nigerians trace the origin of the national debt to the time you were in government. Why was it necessary for Nigeria to borrow at that time?

Yar' Adua: You know, let me talk about this debt. As at the time we left government, we left this country with enough money in the reserve to pay the debt. To start with we left it with more than enough money than we borrowed. That is one. Two: we did not borrow money for any social projects. We borrowed money for projects which they by themselves, if they continue to be run properly, were quite capable of paying the debt. And we refused to allow our state governments to go borrowing money. There is a difference. You take some money and you want to start a project; that project on its own should actually pay for itself. In fact, it is not good business to say you want to do a project of one million naira and you have two million naira in the bank and you take one million naira and go and do the project.

And the business of running a government, especially a developing country, isn't just writing figures about budgets and so on. I still maintain that if a government has a project, if you're going to build a refinery in a country where you produce oil, if you can borrow money to build it, why should you spend the country's money. Why don't you use the money and spend on education? Because I don't have this refinery, I have to import a 100,000 barrels of refined fuel everyday. How much does that cost me in foreign exchange? Now if you build the refinery, and you do the arithmetic, even when you take the cost of the 100,000 barrels, because you have to transport it out and transport it back pay for it. Now if you build a 100,000 barrel refinery, the savings you make by not transporting 100,000 barrels out in a period of five years would have paid for this refinery. And from then on, it is your refinery. But if you put the refinery there and a year later, two years later, the refinery is mismanaged and therefore you're still taking 100,000 barrels out, you can't turn round and blame the government that thought about building the refinery. You cannot say, Ah, that this government knew that in two years time, somebody is going to come and make the refinery not to work.

Newswatch: Many people say that you had a hand in the coup of 1983 that brought Buhari into power.

Yar' Adua: Who?

Newswatch: Umaru Dikko

Yar' Adua: I was not in army, so how can I have a hand in a coup that brought somebody into power?

Newswatch: You were a retired general not so far from the army, what's so strange about that?

Yar' Adua: Nothing, except that I didn't sponsor it. ■

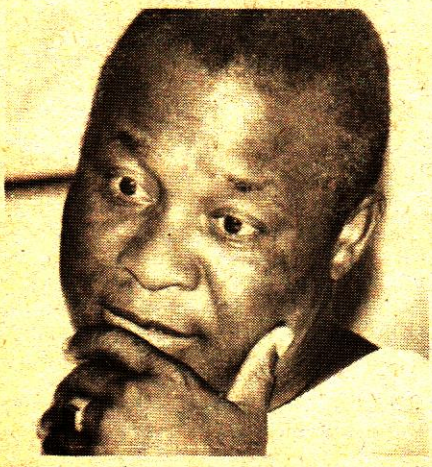
Stop the June Poll

Association for Better Nigeria, campaigning for extension of military rule, takes case to court

By Nats Agbo

DESPITE ASSURANCES BY President Ibrahim Babangida in the last three weeks that he would leave office in August 27, campaigners for the extension of his rule have stepped up their efforts. On Tuesday, the Association for Better Nigeria, ABN, a prominent IBB-Must-Stay group, took its case to the Abuja high court. In a suit filed by Abimbola Davis, one of ABN's national coordinators, the organisation wants the court to restrain the national electoral commission, NEC, from conducting the June 12 presidential election.

The association said its opposition to the presidential election based on two planks: alleged religious tension in Nigeria and claims that the national conventions of the National republican Convention, NRC, and the Social Democratic Party, SDP, held between March 27 and 29 were neither free nor fair. In a supporting affidavit, Davis said: "There is religious tension in Nigeria due to recent religious disturbances in various parts of the country. If elections are conducted in this tensed up period, it is likely to lead to chaos and a breach of public peace." The ABN, according to him, was also opposed to the June 12 presidential election because a proper foundation for radical transformation of the economy is still in progress.



Okoro: Unwavering

The organisation wants the court to grant it the opportunity to prove that national conventions of the two political parties were not free. It asked the court to compel J.B. Nzeribe, a national delegate of the SDP during the party's convention in Jos, to produce the 2,060 affidavits in his possession alleging that delegates were bribed to vote the way they did at the convention. This, the ABN reasoned, will enable it to justify its request that the president be allowed to stay in office until October 3, 1997. The ABN, therefore, asked the court to restrain the president from handing over power to anybody until the case before it has been determined.

Last week's action of the ABN took many people by surprise. Already, the association is locked in a legal battle with five human rights groups over its activities. Leader of the campaign for Democracy, CD, Civil Liberties Organisation, CLO, National Association of Democratic Lawyers, NADL, Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, CDHR, and the Gani Fawehinmi Solidarity Association, GFSA, went to court to protest the legality of ABN's campaign for the extension of military rule by four more years. The human rights groups wanted a court declaration that the aims, objectives and programmes of ABN are unlawful. They want the court to compel the federal attorney-general to initiate proceedings against all members of the association.

But Bayo Kehinde, counsel for the ABN, has challenged the competence of leaders of the human rights groups to initiate the case . We argued that the activists should have sought the order of the court to sue the ABN in a representative capacity. Such failure, he said, had breached order 13 Rule of the 14 of the Lagos State High Court Rules of 1992. In reply, Ayo Olanrewaju, lawyer for the human rights activists said the motion was mischievous and could not sustain the request that the original suit be dismissed.

Ruling on the motion, Dapo Akinsanya, a judge of the Lagos High court, said provisions of the court rules on which Kehinde based his argument did not make it mandatory for the applicants to seek leave of the court to file the suit. She said failure by the human rights activists to obtain leave of the court before suing in a representative capacity could therefore not render the suit invalid. She consequently dismissed ABN's motion with N200 cost against the association.

The ABN's court action even after Akinsanya's judgment may have been informed by activities of other groups calling for the extension of military rule some of which have made financial contributions for ABN's operations. Jerry Okoro, a prominent member of ABN, told *Newswatch* recently that prominent Nigerians were in fact, funding the IBB-Must-Stay campaign. The only group that has so far openly identified with the aims and objectives of the ABN is the newly formed Elders' Committee whose only known members are Samuel Ikoku, Tanko Yakassai and Margaret Ekpo. Their argument that the economic and political situation of Nigeria did not provide conducive atmosphere for a change in the leadership agrees with what leaders of ABN have been saying since the association was formed more than a year ago.

Emboldened by such support, the ABN printed posters with the president's picture which it has distributed to supporters all over the country. But the association's billboards mounted in Abuja for the same purpose were pulled down by security men. So far, no attempt has been made to prosecute ABN members. This has created doubt in the minds of critics of the government about its sincerity concerning the August 27 hand over date. But at the graduation ceremony of the first batch of students from the Nigerian War College, NWC, May 17, the president described such sceptics as deceitful and mischievous. He said they were only "in search of martyrdom and haunted by their own failures and or reluctance to admit those failures."

Reported by Abdulrazaq Magaji

Twist in Their Hope

Mamman Nasir committee wants Abuja mayor to be appointed, not elected

By Abdulrazaq Magaji

THE 10-MEMBER PRESIdential committee on the future of Abuja has recommended that the mayor of the territory should be appointed rather than elected. The report was submitted to President Ibrahim Babangida May 11.

The committee headed by Mamman Nasir, said it took into consideration the possibility of a bitter political rivalry if an elected mayor and the next civilian president belong to different political camps. A member of the committee told *Newswatch* that the arrangement would "lessen areas of conflict at a time Nigerians are craving for an enduring third republic." To reduce areas of conflict between the mayoral and federal governments, the committee recommended that the appointed mayor should not exercise rights over land within the federal capital territory, FCT.

Newswatch learnt that the recommendations provoked a storm in the committee. Two deputy mayors opposed the proposals and argued that they infringed on the rights of the indigenes of the FCT to determine who their leaders should be. But they endorsed the final report because of campaign that some influential Nigerians within and outside government had already endorsed the arrangement.

By last week, the presidency was still studying the report but a source told *Newswatch* that it was almost certain the federal government would accept the recommendation and act on it before the August 27 handover date. A senior official at the presidency said last Monday: "The government has a duty to act now to forestall a repeat of the ugly development which we witnessed during the second republic."

Contents of the report *Newswatch* found out have been leaked to some well-placed residents of Abuja who are openly resentful of the arrangement. They argue that although Abuja, in official parlance, belongs to all Nigerians, appointing a mayor who may not necessarily be an indigene was capable of jeopardising their interests. A prominent indigene of Abuja, who requested not to be named, told *Newswatch* last week: "Although there was no plebiscite before Abuja was chosen as the nation's capital, nobody protested the decision. But we hate double standards which are being applied in the case of Abuja. Whereas other Nigerians are allowed to elect their own leaders, indigenes of Abuja are being asked to forego that right."

The recommendations are already in conflict with an existing arrangement through which all the four deputy mayors in Abuja were elected into office. But the new arrangement will create the situation whereby all the four elected mayors will report to an unelected mayor.

Ibrahim Takura and Adamu Shuaibu emerged as the mayoral candidates of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, and the National Republican Convention, NRC, respectively in 1991. The mayoral election, which would have been held simultaneously with those of the governorship and state assembly in 1991, was postponed indefinitely. The National Electoral Commission, NEC, explained later that the postponement was to allow for an enabling law on the future of Abuja.

Officials of both the NRC and SDP in Abuja denied knowledge of the panel's recommendations but were emphatic that even if it were so it was most unlikely that government would accept it. The mayoral candidates expressed similar views. Shuaibu told *Newswatch* that the democratic values which government had so far tried to internalise in Nigerians "will be a mirage if a mayor is appointed for Abuja when similar positions are elective elsewhere in the country." Said he: "Members of the panel are men of integrity and it will be unfortunate if they did turn in a report like that." ■

Nasir: Favours appointment of Abuja mayor

The London Ripples

Contract given to a new, unknown British public relations firm by the office of transitional council chairman, Shonekan, kicks up controversy

By Kayode Soyinka, London

THE TRANSITIONAL Council has awarded a major international public relations contract to a London-based firm, AfriCosmos. The exact contract sum believed to be worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, is not known. The contract was awarded early this year, but only came into the open recently because of the controversy it has generated.

The controversy centred on two important factors. AfriCosmos had never been heard of in the public relations industry in Britain until it secured the Nigerian contract. The manner in which the contract was awarded, described as "astonishing" by officials of some of the companies which lost put into question the role played in the selection of AfriCosmos by the Nigeria High Commission and Earnest Shonekan, chairman of the transitional council.

This is what *Newswatch* has gathered about the contract. Early this year, the Nigeria High Commission in London contacted the West Africa Committee in London and told the man who runs it, Gerald Blakey, a retired brigadier, that it needed a professional public relations assistance in the United Kingdom. The committee is made up of British companies with business interests in West Africa, especially Nigeria. The high commission asked Blakey to recommend a reputable PR specialist, possibly from among the members of West Africa Committee.

Blakey agreed and set up a sub-committee to look into the high commission's request. The sub-committee was asked to recommend PR firms in the UK with expertise on Africa, and Nigeria in particular. The sub-committee wrote several of such companies asking for their credentials. After vetting the credentials, Blakey recommended Raitt Orr & Associates to the high commission.

Shonekan: Embroiled in controversial contract

Raitt Orr & Associates are well known in the UK and Nigeria. It is one of a few London-based public relations consultancies which specialise in Africa, the third world and development issues. Both senior partners of the firm, Ian Raitt and Patrick Orr, lived for many years in Africa. The firm has subsidiaries in Kenya. In 1989 it organised the information programme for the Carter Presidential Centre of Atlanta, Georgia, which led to the international donors' conference in Lagos to raise funds for the eradication of guinea worms. That donor conference was addressed by both former US President Jimmy Carter and President Ibrahim Babangida.

Reitt Orr and Associates felt certain it would get the contract. But sometime in March, Blakey phoned Raitt Orr to say there was a problem. The transitional council had given the contract to AfriCosmos which did not even bid for it. The contract was said to have been awarded to AfriCosmos directly from the office of Shonekan. The Nigeria high commission in London did not know about it until it was too late.

Newswatch has found that AfriCosmos is a new company, incorporated only January 8, this year. The company is owned by a British journalist, Richard Hall, former Africa Editor of the *London Observer*, who now publishes the bi-monthly newsletter, *Africa Analysis*.

HALL HAS BEEN A regular visitor to Nigeria. He is well known to senior Nigerian government officials and well connected in the country. Carol Edith Cattley and Ahmed Rajab, an editor of *Africa Analysis* as are listed as co-directors of AfriCosmos. Adam Poole is the general manager. Hall has opened an office for AfriCosmos on 64, Ludgate House in Fleet Street, central London. But in reality, as *Newswatch* found out, AfriCosmos is just Adam Poole. He is assisted only by one freelance journalist and a secretary.

Professional public relations practitioners in London question the competence of AfriCosmos for the job. One argued that Hall "has not been into public relations directly. The whole thing is sordid."

Since getting the contract, Poole has been travelling with Shonekan in his European tours. He was in Paris with him three weeks ago organising press interviews for him. Poole told *Newswatch* how his company got the contract: "They (transitional council) approached us." He would not say when but went on: "Em, do you know our relationship with *Africa Analysis*? *Newswatch* asked him what AfriCosmos had been asked to do for the transitional council. He said AfriCosmos was a "sister company" to *Africa Analysis*. *Newswatch* asked him what exactly AfriCosmos had been asked to do for the transitional council. He said "We are working for the transitional council to disseminate economic and financial information around Europe... Well, the brief is Europe, meeting journalists, meeting people who are interested in Nigeria, and accompanying members of the transitional council when they visit any European country." Poole added that AfriCosmos had sent out a couple of press releases on behalf of the transitional council and that he had visited European countries such as France and Holland, and had been to Nigeria and met with government officials.

Poole said his company had been working for the transitional council since "about February this year." He also confirmed that it is a newly registered company, though he denied that the company had been hurriedly set up in order to secure the contract from the transitional council. Asked who else, apart from him, works for AfriCosmos, he said: "Well, let me give you the answer, but there is some confidentiality here which I will ask you to respect, and let me explain what the confidentiality is all about. *Africa Analysis* has been running a company called Africa Business and investment Limited. It has had a long time on it and it is from here that AfriCosmos is emerging, so it already has expertise in PR and investment information through its parent company. You understand why that is confidential at this point? It is saying that although AfriCosmos is quite a new company its expertise is older than its name suggests because it is an offshoot of (an existing company which knows Africa well.)"

Professional public relations practitioners in London question the competence of AfriCosmos for the job

Hall is a director in both Africa Analysis and Africa Business and Investment Limited. Newswatch asked him in London to explain how he went over the high commissioner, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji, to get the contract directly from Shonekan and how much he had been paid for the job. He declined to go into the financial details. He said obviously we've got enough money to be able to do it professionally. I can't go into the financial details, really I can't. But, really, we have been paid properly."

Hall said he knew Shonekan very well and likes him. He explained that he met Shonekan when he came to London last January to see the British Prime Minister John Major. "I went to see him in the Hyde Park Hotel where he was staying. I've known him for some long time actually. So we have this arrangement. I'm sorry it won't be proper for me to go into the financial details. If someone tells you at the other end, if Shonekan tells, you, that is another matter, but I don't think we could do that. Obviously we have got a contract which makes it well worth our while to do this job which I think is a job worth doing because I think that Shonekan is somebody that I respect."

AfriCosmos, Hall claimed, is also a member of the West Africa Committee. If so, why didn't it bid for the contract through the committee? Hall claimed he thought the bidding that was invited by the West Africa Committee on behalf of the high commission, was for a different thing. "It was overlapping, I think, but not quite the same thing, because that was something to do with putting down the image that Nigeria has because of the cases of people being picked up carrying drugs and so on, that was much more of a thing concerned with the Nigerian image in London. This is where the West Africa Committee was directly involved because this was essentially a British thing. Whereas Shonekan, who has been running all over Europe, wanted something which was much wider," he said.

Was it fair of him to have used his personal contact with Shonekan to swing the contract? Hall was asked. His answers: "Well, I can't comment on that. I don't know that "Triple A" did know or didn't know. I can't deny that Shonekan is somebody that I know. Maybe Shonekan thought that we ought to get it, that's all. What I am most concerned with is to really do a very good job for Nigeria, that is my main concern. It is not a political job.I won't be at all happy to get involved in a political job. I would reject it. I am very sorry that we seemed to have preempted what the West African Committee was doing, but quite frankly I think there was a bit of cross-wires there, because I think what the high commissioner was trying to do was something quite different."

The first job AfriCosmos did for the transitional council was a press release translated into five languages including, Japanese, and distributed to newspapers across Europe. Attached to the release was a covering letter dated February 12, written by Poole which stated that "AfriCosmos has been commissioned by the transitional government in Nigeria to distribute business-oriented materials throughout the European community. It is our aim to supply objective and topical reports written by professional journalists." ■

The Rejected Stone

Ex-Olowo of Owo, after 25 years of deposition, moves closer to the throne, thanks to some of the King-makers and Owo indigenes

By Kayode Olaokun

OLATERU OLAGBEGI, THE ex-Olowo of Owo, deposed in 1968, is set to make history of sorts in Nigeria. Since March 29 when Adekola Ogunoye, who replaced him as Olowo died, eminent indigenes of the town have been working hard for the reinstatement of Olagbegi, who they see as a victim of political vendetta. "I have lost count of the number of petitions I have received on the issue. And as I receive them I always dispatch them to the state government so that they too can know the feeling of the people here," Adewunmi Abitoye, the chairman of Owo local government, told *Newswatch*. By last week, the Owo parapo community, owo Muslim Community, Owo Christian Community, National Union of Road Transport Workers, NURTW, Owo branch, Owo Market Women Association and various youth organisations in the town had written to demand the reinstatement of Olagbegi. They are arguing for reconciliation of all feuding factions in the town and the return of peace. The leadership of the local government seemed to have been swayed by the argument of the petitioners. Says Abitoye: "As the representative of the people I am supposed to be on the side of the majority and since a majority of the people say they want Olagbegi back, we have no option than to support him."

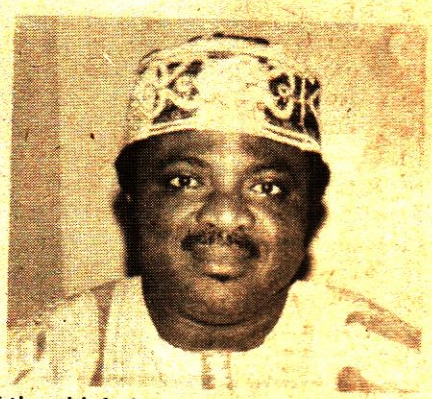
But the state government is undecided. Last month it invited a cross section of the Owo indigenes to Akure, the state capital to feel the mood of the people. At the meeting coordinated by Kola Adeneke, the special adviser to the governor on chieftaincy affairs, the opposing side, put up strong arguments of equal plausibility. Apparently confused, the state government carried out a random sample of opinion of people in Owo.

Photo by Matthew Fajl

Olagbegi: Seeking for a second chance

Although the official result of the poll is yet to be released, *Newswatch* learnt that majority of those interviewed favoured the return of Olagbegi.

Even so, some of the king-makers are not moved by the plebiscite. *Newswatch* learnt that it took spirited lobbying to get some of them to favour Olagbegi. By last week, four of the seven king-makers had been won over. They are Michael Fabowole the Ojumu and chairman of the regency council, M.A. Adelanke, the Ajana, Justus Adetula, the Sasere and John Agunloye, the Ojomo. On May 17, they wrote to the governor saying that having considered the opinion of the generality of the people, they would want



Ajasin, Abitoye: At the opposing ends of the chieftaincy crisis

Olagbegi to be reinstated. The three other king-makers, the Elerewe, Osere and Akowa are still firmly set against the reinstatement of the ex-Olowo.

Wale Olateru-Olagbegi, a son of the former ruler, told *Newswatch* that the three men remained recalcitrant because of the fear that they may be replaced when Olagbegi comes back. The three chiefs were appointed by Ogunoye, when he deposed incumbents who were accused of loyalty to Olagbegi even in deposition. To pro-Olagbegi group as represented By Wale Olateru Olagbegi: "Since we have got the majority of the king-makers (four out of seven) and the entire populace are in favour of my father, there is no doubt that he will come back." According to Owo tradition, a simple majority by the king-makers is what is needed to recommend an Oba-to-be to the governor.

A MAJOR ANTAGONIST TO the ex-Olowo's reinstatement is Adekunle Ajasin, an indigene of the town and former governor of Ondo State. Although he refused to talk to *Newswatch* saying "people will read meanings to anything I say now," his hands were visible in all the anti-Olagbegi campaigns. *Newswatch* was reliably informed that the man has instructed the next ruling house, the Ajike family to settle their differences and present a common front. Currently both Adu Ajike and Aladi Ajike are vying for the stool with none wishing to step down for the other.

Ogunoye: Who next?

The animosity between Olagbegi and Ajasin dated back to the Action Group, AG 'crisis in the first republic when Obafemi Awolowo, the party leader and Ladoke Akintola, the then premier of the West fell apart. While Ajasin remained with Awolowo, Olagbegi pitched his tent with Akintola.

When the military seized power in 1966, followers of Awolowo prevailed on the government of Adeyinka Adebayo, then a colonel and military governor of Western Region to suspend Olagbegi as the Olowo. The Adebayo government was favourably disposed to the erstwhile Action Group. When he was recalled in 1968, his come back to Owo set off a spate of violent demonstration in which the Olowo was nearly killed.

In three days, the government had deposed the Olowo after an unusually swift inquiry. If he succeeds in his bid to regain his throne, Olateru-Olagbegi, 83, would be the first Nigerian traditional ruler not only to outlive his successor after deposition but to gain back his throne through the normal channels of picking rulers. ■

This Week in Quality magazine

M.K.O. Abiola's daughter in hot romance with son of a prominent lawyer

Details in Q

"Ghanaian girls spoilt our men!"

— Explodes Mrs Dupe Jemibewon, second wife of General David Jemibewon

Blame Govt. for M.P.'s excessive spending!

— Senator Imoke says it all in Q-interview

Out on Tuesday, June 1st

For Love of the Country

Another watchdog group, Organisation for Good Governance, emerges

By Wale Akin Aina

GROWING CONCERN over the state of the nation was again reflected last week when eminent Nigerians gathered at the Otta Farm Complex of Olusegun Obasanjo a general and former head of state, in Ogun State. The meeting, convened by Obasanjo was attended by another former head of state and general, Muhammadu Buhari. It was a roll call of retired generals. Tunde Idiagbon former chief of staff, supreme headquaters; Ebitu Ukiwe, former chief of general staff; as well as retired generals Theophilus Danjuma, Alani Akinrinade and Joe Garba.

Also present were Michael Adekunle Ajasin, former civilian governor of Ondo State and five former presidential aspirants, Mahmud Waziri, Datti Ahmed, Sarah Jubril, Olabiyi Durojaiye and Adebayo Adedeji. Their main concern: the increasing secessionist tendencies in some parts of the country, decaying public utilities and loss of faith in governance. *Newswatch* learnt that the Otta conference has tentatively assumed the name of "Association for Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria, ADGN."

Obasanjo, in his address stated the neutrality of the group "we should neither be anti-government nor pro-government." Rather, he added, government

Obasanjo: Convened the meeting

through activities of the group should find the task of nation building easier and less problematic. In effect, the group is assuming a watch-dog role, essentially to sustain stability and durability of national interest and institutions. *Newswatch* learnt that some participants were worried that the meeting could be seen as anti-government. Those who attended were said to have been warned by friends who feared that they might be arrested by security agents. Before the Otta conference, a meeting was supposed to have been held between Obasanjo and Anthony Enahoro, leader of the Movement for National Reconstruction, MNR, and former minister of information in the Gowon administration. Enahoro did not show up because he was told that Obasanjo had cancelled the meeting, which he later learnt was not true.

Paramount in the discussions was the issue of unit and cohesion of the nation. The group noted that the reversion to ethnicity with phrases like "Iboland" "Tivland," "Yorubaland" or "Hausaland" was in ascendance, saying the trend must be discontinued as it is a sure recipe for regional strifes. According to Obasanjo, ethic agitations were created by "disillusionment and dissatisfaction with everything around and apparent despair on not knowing where we are heading." The solution, he said is to be found in political stability.

A thread that ran through the discussions was lack of conviction that President Ibrahim Babangida will leave office, August 27. That was in spite of the president's speech to the first graduands of the National War College two weeks ago. There, the president lambasted his critics and had stated that "The military's commitment to withdrawal to the barracks is irrevocable."

A communique on the four-hour meeting which the conferees promised to pass on to government was still being expected by the end of last week. ■

STATES

■ AKWA IBOM STATE

Esuene Buried

UDOAKAHA JACOB ESUENE, A 55-year-old retired brigadier-general and pioneer governor of the defunct South Eastern State, who died April 6, was buried May 22.

Clement Ebri, governor of Cross River State, who received the corpse at Calabar Stadium May 20, extolled the virtues of Esuene as a visionary and purposeful leader who made the former Cross River State what it is today. In appreciation, he renamed the Calabar Sports Stadium after Esuene.

Akpan Isemin, Akwa Ibom State governor, said Esuene "will be remembered for the various structures he put in place as governor." Yakubu Gowon, a retired general and former head of state, under whom Esuene served as governor for nine years, described him as a visionary leader. "I'm not surprised that he achieved so much during his tenure," he said.

■ EDO STATE

It's Boom Time

COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL life in Benin City is booming with the installation of street lights on 22 streets. Joseph Okechukwu, a trader on Sakponba Road, told *Newswatch* that his supermarket stays open till 9 p.m. daily. He said before the installation of lights he used to close at 6 p.m.

Uyi John said last week that the crime rate in Igun street where he lives has reduced drastically. "Since every part of the street is now lit up night marauders find it difficult to operate."

The government has also rehabilitated traffic lights in junctions to ease the flow of traffic. Before now only the street light located at Central Hospital was functional in the whole city.

Installation of lights is part of a multi-phased programme by John Odigie-Oyegun, the governor, to boost social and economic life in Edo State. ■

Free at Last

After years of a bitter, bloody struggle, Eritrea gains independence

By Olu Ojewale

IT WAS A CARNIVAL OF SORTS. Thousands of jubilant Eritreans poured into the streets of Asmara, capital of Eritrea, singing, dancing and displaying fireworks as their country became independent, midnight May 23.

In a poignant scene at the September 1 Square, veterans of the 30 year struggle, brandishing AK-47 rifles, were led in a parade by their maimed colleagues on wheelchairs. White-robed men from the new country's nine ethnic groups danced, waving swords and spears. School children, holding lit candles, marched through the square in front of thousands of observers and well-wishers from across the globe.

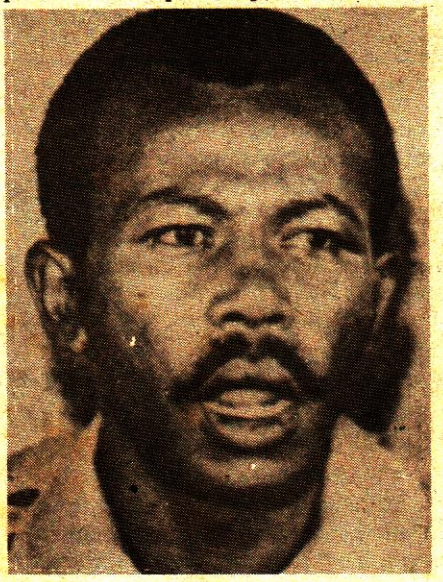
Issaias Afeworki, president of the new country, said: "Today is the resurrection of Eritrea, a day of joy and hope. We are formally declaring our independence and raising our national flag".

Eritrea, a former Italian colony in the Horn of Africa, bordering Djibouti and Ethiopia in the South and Sudan in the West with 1,000 kilometres Red Sea coastline, was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. Displeased, the Eritreans took up arms, September 1, 1961. Saad Mohammed, 28, symbolised that dream for self-determination. Mohammed lost a brother and he himself received injuries four times in the struggle. To him, all these were a token of his own sacrifice for his people's independence. Wearing khaki shorts, plastic sandals and bush hat, Mohammed who hoisted his country's flag for the first time, told newsmen proudly: "I fought eight solid years for this. I feel very proud and joyful".

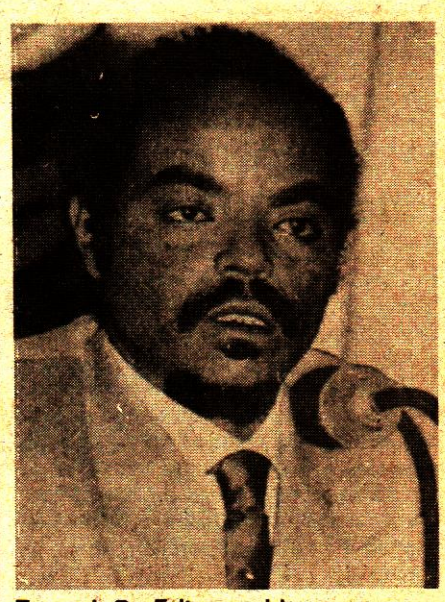
That perhaps could not be said for Meles Zenawi, president of Ethiopia from which Eritrea gained its freedom. Without Eritrea, Ethiopia is landlocked. Acknowledging the painful reality, Zenawi signed an economic cooperation agreement with the new state last week to make use of its waterways. In apparent reference to his predecessor, Zenawi called on the state to "fight together for African Unity", as they did to oust the despotic regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in May 1991. Mengistu's departure paved the way for Eritrea's independence. Immediately he fled Ethiopia the current regime made Eritrea a semi-autonomous province and allowed it to hold a referendum on its fate. In the April 23-25 UN-supervised plebiscite more than 99 percent Eritreans opted for an independent nation.

Afeworki who led the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, EPLF, to independence, has enjoined his countrymen to promote peaceful cooperation and democracy, warning that ethnicity is now breeding "senseless killing and cruelty," across the globe. Eritrea has nine ethnic groups and two major religions – Christianity and Islam.

For now, the major challenge facing the new country is how to feed its 3.5 million population. The 30 year civil war coupled with several years of drought has crippled the country's economy. Most of its towns were devasted by the war and its once thriving dairy industry now produces at 50 percent pre-war level. In the event, the survival of the more than 80 percent of the population, including 750,000 exiles, depends on food aid. That aid is fast drying up. According to Brenda Barton, information officer of the World Food Programme, WFP, there was an appeal for $48 million to feed the war ravaged nation in January. "To date, the response has been nil", she said. She added "the food pipeline might dry up by August when the relief stock will be consumed". Equally worrisome is how to raise $2.5 billion to rehabilitate war-scarred sea ports of Massawa and Assab, rebuild roads, modernise agriculture and revive its industrial base. So far, $100 billion has been promised. Experts say it will take several years for Eritreans to make meaningful progress in its rehabilitation programmes. But Afeworki maintains that if they can remain united in their aspirations as they did in fighting their common enemies, it would not take long before Eritreans are back on their feet. Eritrea will be admitted as the 52nd member of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, in June at its next summit in Cairo, Egypt. ■

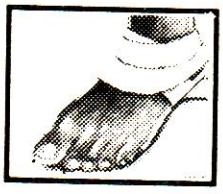


Mengistu: Forced out



Zenawi: On Eritrean side

21 Ways to use TCP



1. CUTS AND WOUNDS
Apply TCP liquid after carefully washing the wound. To dress, apply clean guaze dabbed in TCP with water solution. Hold in position with sticking plaster and without heavy bandaging.

2. OPEN BRUISES
Prevent infection from open bruises by applying lint soaked in TCP liquid diluted with water. Re-soak lint at intervals.

3. DAILY BATHE
Disinfect bathing water with TCP liquid, especially in absence of clean water, to prevent infection.

4. BURNS AND SCALDS
Immediately apply TCP liquid and allow to dry. Lightly fix guaze dabbed in TCP diluted with 2 or 3 times quantity of water, over affected part. Renew dressing should pain re-occur. In severe burns, apply TCP immediately and call a Doctor.

5. PIMPLES AND SPOTS (INFECTED)
Use TCP liquid or cream twice daily to stop super-infection and enhance healing. Allow to stay on skin. Also, use TCP ointment for spots.

6. BOILS
Open boil and let out pus. Apply TCP liquid to prevent infection, speed granulation for healing.

7. HEAT RASHES
Apply TCP liquid twice or thrice daily and allow to dry on skin. (For infants, dilute TCP with twice amount of water). Full strength or slightly diluted TCP is also helpful against irritations of chicken pox, measles, etc. Also use TCP cream or ointment.

8. SORES
Lightly bandage over sore, a thin pad of surgical guaze dabbed with TCP liquid. Renew dressing once or twice daily.

9. ECZEMA
For "weeping" eczema apply TCP liquid twice or thrice daily and allow to dry on skin. Dilute with water for sensitive areas and infants.

10. MOUTHWASH
Keep teeth and gums healthy, and ensure fresh breath by using diluted TCP liquid as mouthwash every morning.

11. CARE OF THE THROAT
Protect throat against germs by gargling with TCP liquid diluted with 5-10 times water quantity.

12. SORE THROAT
Gargle every hour or two with TCP liquid diluted with 4 or 5 times water quantity. Or spray throat frequently with slightly diluted TCP, using all-glass throat spray.

13. FOR SEPTIC OR ULCERATED THROAT (TONSILITIS)
Apply full strength or slightly diluted TCP liquid once or twice daily.

14. GUM TROUBLES
Apply TCP liquid on cotton wool to the affected gums twice or thrice daily. Also use TCP diluted with water as mouthwash, after meals. See your Dentist.

15. MOUTH ULCERS
Dab ulcers frequently with TCP liquid on cotton wool. Also use diluted TCP as mouthwash.

16. AFTER TEETH EXTRACTION
Apply cotton wool soaked in TCP liquid to wounds from teeth extraction, for prevention of infection and to promote healing. Only use 5-6 hours after extraction by holding liquid in mouth for 1 minute or so.

17. PRICKLY HEAT
Dab affected area lightly twice or thrice daily with cotton wool soaked in TCP liquid. Or apply TCP cream.

18. VAGINAL DOUCHING
The open nature of the vagina encourages infection from pubic hair, external objects and intercourse. Prevent infection by maintaining required PH (Acidic) level. Douche daily with 3 or 4 tablespoonfuls of TCP diluted with 1 pint of tepid water.

19. AFTER SHAVE
To prevent infection and promote healing of cuts and open bruises through shaving, apply TCP liquid diluted with water. Leave to dry. Also use TCP cream.

20. PILES
Bathe external piles with TCP liquid twice daily with 3 or 4 times quantity of tepid water. Syringe internal piles with TCP diluted with 5 times water amount Follow with application of TCP ointment in both cases.

3. OPEN BLISTERS
Apply TCP liquid immediately after gardening, tennis, sporting, etc. to prevent and heal blister. Allow to dry on skin.

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Arrest of PAC May Derail Talks

THE ARREST OF 49 LEADERS of the Pan African Congress, PAC, on Tuesday has sent South Africa's constitutional talks into a tailspin. The arrests sparked off bitter exchanges between members of PAC, African National Congress, ANC, and the government, who were scheduled to continue discussions on the political future of South Africa on Thursday.

The ANC warned that the arrest could undermine the multi-racial democracy talks. But Hermus Kriel, the law and order minister, is adamant on holding onto the arrested officials, because, according to him, they were connected with specific crimes. He told parliament that the PAC leadership was responsible for the current incessant attacks on white south Africans. He said "it was the duty of the police to act against suspected criminals, regardless of their political affiliation."

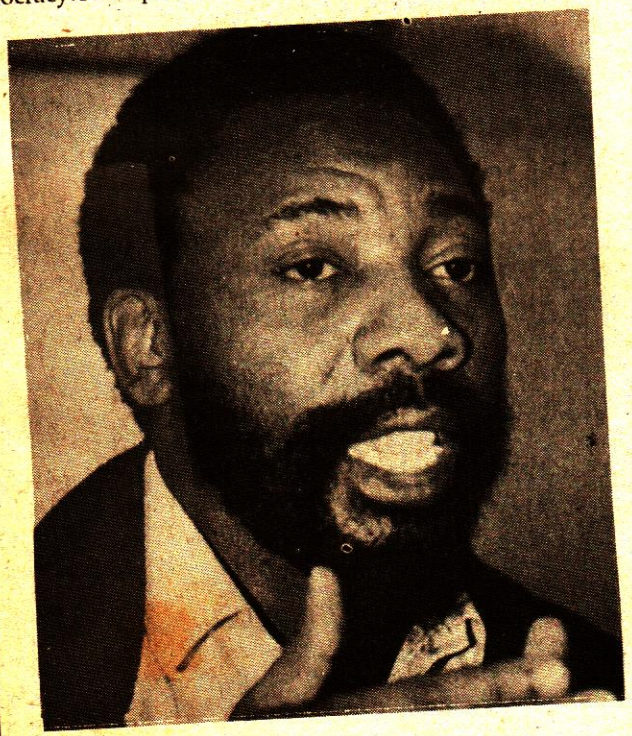
Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC secretary-general, sees the move as a dangerous precedent capable of overturning the gains of anti-apartheid stand of President Frederik de Klerk, even as he conceded that some South Africans are using violence and intimidation to stall the country's move towards multi-racial democracy. Ramaphosa who addressed the press with Joe Slovo, Communist Party, called for the dismissal of Kriel.

Benny Alexander, PAC's secretary-general, unilaterally announced its group's withdrawal from the constitutional talks. He said police had raided more than 200 homes of PAC members and detained several members of the household of Clarence Makwetu, the PAC president. On BBC Alexander described he clampdown as the biggest since that of 1963. He said "the regime has decided to arrest our own negotiators and leaders in order to force the PAC to withdraw from negotiations during the crucial coming weeks when the most important decisions on the future of the country are about to take place."

Last March, the South African government tried to exclude PAC from the multi-racial talks because Azania People's Liberation Army, APLA, its armed wing killed five whites and injured 35 others in racial attacks. At the time, the ANC warned that "pandering to emotional calls for the PAC's exclusion is counter-productive and will only lead to polarisation and lack of communication."

Police tried to pin the five-day violent attacks in black townships on APLA, and promised to deal with its members ruthlessly. Police said the number of people killed in violence in black township had risen to 50. The force announced that 20 bodies had been found in Kempton township, south east of Johannesburg.

The latest round of outbreak of violence, sparked off by blacks in Johannesburg was between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Fighters. Reports say some armed Inkatha supporters attacked a peaceful march of ANC supporters May 22. In the clash 13, people were killed and many others injured. The violence continued until mid last week. ANC appealed for calm and called for more police protection. Political observers say the violence was meant to disrupt the multi-racial constitutional talks.



Ramaphosa

SUDAN

Back in the Trenches

LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER the collapse of the Sudanese peace talks in Abuja, the Sudanese government has warned that a full scale fighting with the Sudan People's Liberation Army, SPLA, rebels is imminent. Both the government forces and SPLA led by John Garang, were supposed to observe a cease-fire while the talks were going on. In Khartoum, last week, the government accused SPLA of reneging on its words.

A Government spokesman said that on May 18, the day Abuja peace talks

Garang

ended, a group of rebels from the SPLA planted land mines near equatoriai state of Southern Sudan. Two lorries were destroyed, a soldier was killed and many other persons were wounded. He also said that on May 20, the rebels shelled government troop position, 45 kilometres South West of south Sudan main town, Juba, killing one soldier and injuring others.

A day later, the rebels ambushed government forces and fighting continued for an hour. The spokesman added that though Garang said he is committed to peace, the repeated aggression by his army clearly indicates, his inability to control his forces. This, the government, interprets as lack commitment on the part of Garang. The government warned that its army would fight back to protect the lives of its soldiers and innocent citizens.

Hussein: War signals

■ IRAQ

Watch Out for Iraq

IRAQ HAS WARNED THE KUWAIT ruling family again of a possible military attack. A senior official of the Saddam Hussein government said the support received by Kuwait from America will not deter the attack if it came to that.

The threat arose out of a recent border adjustment by the United Nations between both countries. Iraq said the adjustment favoured Kuwait. "Iraqis' acceptance of the UN resolution does not mean it approves the violation of its borders or allows the Aabah (Kuwatis) ruling family to plot against its security," Nuri Al-Marsuni, Iraqs secretary for information said.

He accused the Kuwati royal family of falsifying history by claiming independent statehood for Kuwat. "Kuwatis are Iraqis," he stressed. Al-Marsuni said the fact that Kuwatis were being denied their identity as Iraqis "is an unprecedented crime." He warned that the construction of a defence wall on the border by Kuwait would not protect the ruling family whenever the attack came.

■ HONG KONG

We'll Meet Again

ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS, the third in the series, on the political future of Hong Kong has ended with Britain and China merely agreeing to meet a fourth time. Although no official statement was made on the success of the concluded talks, observers said, it was minimal.

Robin Mclaren, British ambassador to China, and leader of the team from London admitted that preliminary work on a large scale agreement on the issue was concluded at the talks. He did not give details.

The talks centred on arrangements, for elections in Hong Kong in 1994 or 1995. It started six months ago after Chris Patterns, governor of Hong Kong presented a plan that will establish democracy in the colony before it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997.

■ CAMBODIA

In the Poll Again

Despite violence and threats, Cambodians vote again after 42 years

DEFYING THE THREATS AND pre-election attacks from the Khmer Rouge guerrillas, Cambodians last week trooped out for their first general elections in 42 years. Apart from uncoordinated attacks in the two Western towns of Kongpong Thom and Siam Reap, the atmosphere was surprisingly calm especially in Phnom Penh, the capital as voting progressed.

In the first day of polling, only a third of the registered voters cast their votes, and by the third day, the United Nations officials said the number was nearly 70 percent. So far, the Khmer Rouge group that vowed to disrupt the elections has not lived up to its threat. Instead, a breakup emerged in the leadership of the group with some of the members participating in the balloting.

Reginald Austin, a professor from Zimbabwe and head of the electoral unit of the United Nations transitional authority in Cambodia, UNTAD, described the situation as "really remarkable and very fortunate." He said 200 guerrillas in the Khmer Rouge abandoned their guns on Tuesday and the call for boycott by their leadership to cast their votes. Eric Falt, United Nations spokesman in Cambodia said the change of heart was welcomed "especially in the area Khmer Rouge gunners had attacked a polling station a day before." On Monday, Khmer Rouge gunners attacked UN peace keepers and installations in Kongpong Thom killing a Cambodian and forcing the closure of a polling station.

UN officials described the defiance and enthusiasm of local Cambodians towards the elections as very encouraging. Peasants were said to have trekked for as far as 30 kilometres to vote despite the open threats by the Khmer Rouge.

Falt said "the turnout represented not only a show of enthusiasm for Cambodians in the elections but also a repudiation of the Khmer Rouge's call for a boycott." The Khmer Rouge are against the elections because "it is aimed at legitimising the government of Phnom Penh installed by Vietnam in the 1970s."

As voting progressed, two parties, the Cambodian People's party, CPP, and The United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodian, FUNCINPEC, are neck to neck in the fight. The CPP under the incumbent Prime Minister Hun Sen with government's resources at his disposal is favoured to win.

Sen said Wednesday, "we will have no problem getting a comfortable majority" but analysts said FUNCINPEC under Norodom Bauariddh, son of former ruling Norodom Sihauomk, will not be a push over. The legislature that will emerge, will formulate a constitution for the country.

The Khmer Rouge era in Cambodia in the early 1970s was characterised by a reign of terror, with over one million Cambodians estimated to have died. In 1975 Vietnames soldiers halted the reign of terror and installed the present leadership under Hun Sen.■

CBN Back With the Mop

Latest excess liquidity mop up by the Central Bank affects trading in money market

By Mike Alabi

TRADING ACTIVITIES IN the Nigerian money market suffered another major reversal, the third in four months when the Central Bank to Nigeria, CBN, issued its stabilisation securities to mop up excess liquidity. Bank treasury executives were caught unawares by the new measure. But the banks promptly raised inter-bank interest rates to an average of 120 percent.

The first mop up January 11 "drained banks of N6 billion, the second March 1, removed N7 billion from the financial system in a move to rid the foreign exchange market of indiscriminate bidding by the banks. The latest action, according to Tony Ede,corporate affairs manager, CBN, is to clean up last year's budget deficit of N43 billion. "Last year's deficit of N43 billion is still in the system and needs to be cleared. And one way of doing so is through the issuance of stabilisation securities," he said.

The inter-bank rate began to fall from 120 percent by the close of trading last Wednesday, raising hopes of a stable rate. Rates dropped to a average of 115 percent by Wednesday last week.

The continued issuance of the stabilisation securities by the CBN worries bankers. The CBN had promised to phase out this instrument and use it "only as a fall back position on a selective basis to augment other instruments." The demand May 13 of $60 million by banks, even after their excess liquidity had been mopped up, was a pointer to the fact that the system was still fluid.

Jimmy Ojo, an economist and chief executive of Ashland Funds Ltd, said "when a bank is prepared to provide about N768.09 million as its Naira cover for its foreign exchange demand in a week, it indicates that some banks only do foreign exchange business than their traditional banking jobs." He said that if the CBN "once more suspends the foreign exchange market, rates could come down. The result would be better. But the use of these stabilisation securities over and over again shows that the control instrument itself is not effective."

Ede has accused banks of engaging in speculative activities at the foreign exchange market, a development which Ojo says increased forex demand to N180 million. A CBN source told *Newswatch* last Tuesday "we knew what we did when we suspended the foreign exchange sales. When they did not have foreign exchange to buy and sell at excessively high rates, they almost deserted their interbank market." But M.A. Sheriff, managing director of Savannah Bank, said the continued use of the control instrument had left even healthy banks in a very difficult financial position.

The commercial lending rates have inched up too. By Tuesday last week, it averaged 60 percent, 10 percent more than it was before the mop up. In finance companies, commercial rates go for between 12 percent and 15 percent monthly. This development, said another CBN source, has made money market more attractive to seekers of short-tenure funds especially traders.

Although the liquidity squeeze has forced up rates it has, however, made the naira stronger. At the last forex bidding session May 13, the naira appreciated by 70 kobo against the pound sterling, closing at N33.74. It also gained against other currencies, exchanging at N13.64 to the Deutsche Mark; N0.196 to the Japanese Yen, N12.162 to the Dutch Guilder and N21.99 to a dollar for the fourth week running. ■

Photo by Akinyele Okundare

Abdulkadir Ahmed; CBN Governor: Mop-up necessary

Your Money is Safe

Progress Bank boss admits an attempt to defraud his bank was made

By Jonah Achema

CASIMIR ANYANWU, MANaging director and chief executive, Progress Bank of Nigeria, PBN Plc is trying to calm the nerves of his bank's customers who are worried by media reports that the bank lost over N60 million to fraudsters. He dismissed the reports last week saying "we do not have in the bank fraud syndicates, nor do we have one that has perfected the act of diverting customers' money."

Fearing that the reports could lead to a run on the bank, he argued: "If it were true that we lost that amount, then the bank would have crumbled on the spot, because our capital base is slightly above N60 million."

Newswatch, however, learnt that there was indeed an attempt to defraud the bank. Anyanwu, who did not deny the attempt said it was foiled by alert officials of the bank and those of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN.

Trouble started for the 10-year-old bank when John Enwerem, the clearing representative of the bank, allegedly falsified the presentation form which shows daily clearing transactions at CBN, and failed to submit cheques for the day's transactions. He was asked to present three cheques to CBN clearing house, to be drawn on an account in Progress Bank for N15 million, N15 million and N30 million respectively. He claimed to have misplaced the form, assuring that he would obtain another one from CBN immediately. Management became restless when after four days, Enwerem was yet to obtain the cheques.

Anyanwu: No fraud here

PBN inspectors decided to investigate. They learnt at the CBN that the original copy of the presentation form contained three extra cheques drawn for N15, N15 million and N30 million, from various commercial banks in Lagos. The inspectors also discovered that the additional cheques were not PBN's instruments as they lacked its security markings.

Progress Bank wrote a letter intimating all commercial banks, merchant banks and CBN of "the loss of our local clearing cheques received from CBN clearing house on March 3, 1993", and cautioning them not to give value to the cheques, "until a counter advice comes from Progress Bank."

The Lagos police command is now investigating the case. It has declared Enwerem wanted in connection with the aborted fraud.

MOVING UP

STB & Associates

STB AND ASSOCIATES, affiliate of Mcann Erickson Worldwide has appointed four new managers. They are **Eddie Udenta, Kola Ogunshote, Sola Lawson and Toyin Akingbogun.**

Udenta, appointed deputy group head, Art, moved from Olive Communications, where he was art director. A first class graduate of graphic design, Udenta started his advertising career in 1990. Ogunshote, a holder of a B.A. in Mass Communication and M.A. in English is now the company's events marketing manager. Ogunshote hitherto an accounts manager with Quadrant Company is an associate member of the Nigeria Institute of Public Relations, NIPR.

Lawson, appointed accounts manager is a 1986 graduate of Economics from University of Jos. Lawson, started his career in 1987 as a sales manager for Tops and Bottoms Incorporated, and later joined Insight Communications in 1990 as senior account executive.

A holder of the Higher National Diploma in Mass Communication; from Ogun State Polytechnic, appointed accounts manager had worked with Cadbury and Sunrise Marketing. He later worked as client service executive with Pic Promotion, later Dat Advertising in 1988.

Other appointments include **Funke Sole** and **Tokumbo Aroloye** as senior account executives, **R. O. Ajewole** as admin officer, **Ayotunde Famurewa** as assistant and **Victor Bako**, trainee copy writer.

Victor Awogu, a member of *Daily Times* editorial board is now the group corporate affairs manager of the *Daily Times* group.

Awogu, a graduate of International Relations, University of Lagos, holds a post graduate diploma in Journalism. A former editor of *Times Week*, he had held senior editorial posts both at the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, and New Nigerian Newspapers, NNN.

TCP's Phenomenal Growth

Tri-Chloro-Phenol disinfectant introduced 35 years ago has become a household name in Nigeria

By Mike Alabi

TRI-CHLORO-PHENOL, TCP, is 35 years old in Nigeria this week. The management of Pfizer Products Plc, the manufacturers and marketers of the brand of disinfectant, formally flagged off the ceremonies marking the 35 years of TCP in the country May 21 with a line up of activities including a TCP-essay competition for nurses and a nation-wide tour of rural communities which will be given the company's healthcare products free.

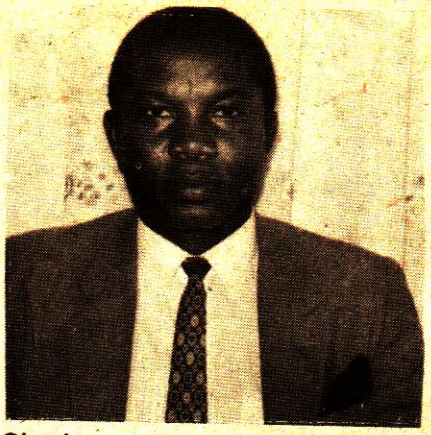
Indeed, a change of executive baton is also to be effected from June 1, to coincide with the 35th anniversary of the popular antiseptic.

TCP is the second biggest product of Pfizer Product plc after combatrin in terms of sales and popularity among Nigerian users. Count Callimachi, the Roman biochemist who invented it in London some 76 years ago had sincerely hoped that TCP would be a veritable cure for venereal diseases.

He produced the product in a small factory until about six years later in 1923 when the British Alakaloids and Pfizer bought the brand. Although tricholorophenol proved ineffective against VD, its anti-bacterials action was recognised and developed later.

TCP is now used in over 110 countries including the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. But the brand did not come into Nigeria until 1958 when Pfizer Products which entered the country a year earlier introduced it. Indeed, after 35 years of family healthcare campaign in Nigeria, the brand has no challenger in terms of its multiple usage and product attributes.

This is the single most important factor which has not only increased the level of consumers faith in the product



Ohuabunwa: Greater heights for TCP

but has also raised it s presence in over 70 percent of Nigerian homes. The many uses of TCP is evident from its "21 ways to use TCP" promotion with which its manufacturers have become well associated.

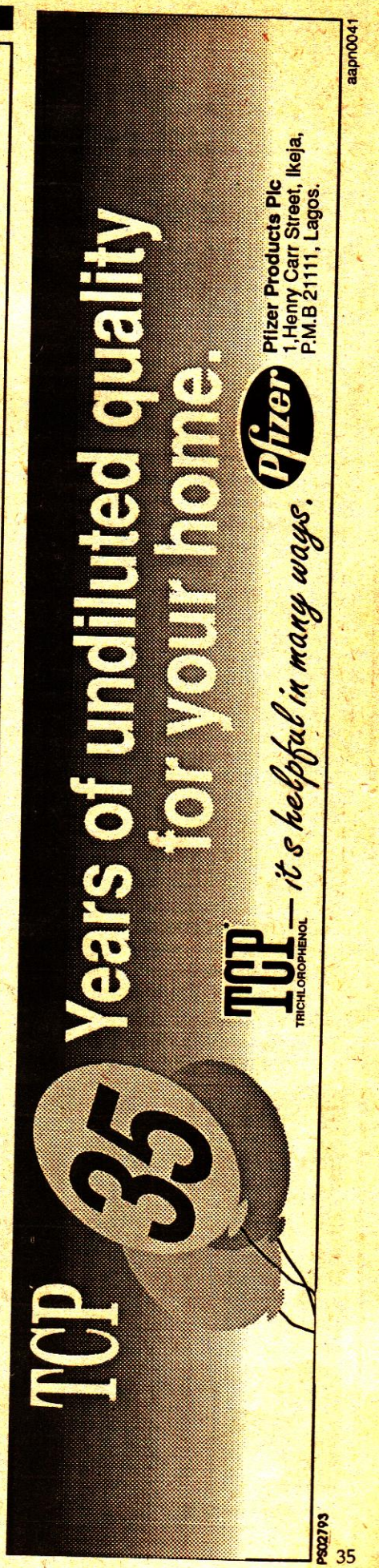
From its initial introductory pack of 60 milligram in the late 1950s, the brand is now available in six forms: 100ml liquid, 240 ml, gallon, ointment: 15gm and cream 30gm.

Such is the popularity of the brand that Pfizer Products Plc, has to grapple with several cases of brand adulteration occasioned by a mismatch of demand over supply. The scarcity, according to Sam Ohuabunwa, the new managing director/regional manager, West Africa, was due to the expanded uses of the brand of antiseptic which though originally designed to be used externally, is now being used also internally by consumers who have found out by themselves that TCP indeed has many uses than its manufacturers knew.

As a result of the growing awareness, Ohuabunwa says that the TCP plant in Nigeria would be expanded within the next one year in order to service the entire West African coast.

The brand's plant in Ghana is to be phased out because it is not viable. In fact, Ghanaians don't patronise the brand made in their country. They prefer that which is made in Nigeria essentially because of its better packaging, says Ohuabunwa.

Pfizer Products Plc is owned 60 percent by Pfizer International of Britain and 40 percent by Nigerians. The company currently import over 90 percent of its raw materials. Looking inward in line with federal government backward integration, is difficult until the petrochemical industry takes off effectively in Nigeria. ■



Publish and Be Rich

Nigerian writers discover a new route to easy money is through the written word on important people

By Muyiwa Akintunde

HOW FAST CAN A MODERately-paid cartoonist make enough money to buy a Lexus, the latest automobile fad of the super-rich? Well, Ake Didi Onu, a cartoonist with *The Guardian*, has the answer. It came straight from his fertile imagination and was splashed on the editorial cartoon page of *The Guardian* April 23. Appropriately titled: *It's Now in Vogue*, the cartoon reflected the conversation of two characters in the cartoon department.

First voice: "You want to ride a Lexus? Fantastic! As for me, I'll like to ride a Baby Benz this year. But, the problem is – I don't know how I can realise my dream."

Second voice: "Hey, wait a minute... I've got an idea. Let's compile a book of cartoons in praise of IBB!"

Onu might have drawn inspiration from the launching of yet another book on President Ibrahim Babangida three days earlier. The pictorial book, titled: *President Ibrahim Babangida: Eight Years of Dynamic Leadership*, fetched the author, Chris Ojokolo, state house photographer of the *Vanguard*, about N2 million at its launching, minus the federal government's donation which the president refused to disclose. The Federal Capital Territory, FCT, and Gabriel Igbinedion, chairman of Okada Airlines, supported the book with N500,000 each, while Mike Adenuga, chipped in N100,000.

Gabriel Umoden fared better when he introduced his book on Babangida last November in Abuja. He raked in N5 million for *The Babangida Years*.

Other books on Babangida include *Prince of the Niger* by Chidi Amuta, former editorial board chairman of *Daily Times*. More are coming. Last week, the *Daily Times* launched an eight-volume book on the Babangida years. By the time he leaves office in August, the president may have lost count of the literary works on his administration and himself. The proliferation is such that Umoden had to include what amounted to a caveat in the pre-launch advertisements for *The Babangida Years*. The promo described the 459-page book as "the original version; the first authoritative biography of Nigeria's most visionary leader." Translation: Others before this, not being authoritative, could be regarded as fake.

Babangida shares the limelight in the biography business with a number of public figures. Mamman Kotangora, a retired major-general and former minister of works and housing, had one done on him by a staff of the ministry, Femi Obatomi. Nkem Agetua, former press secretary to Joshua Dogonyaro, a lieutanant-general and former ECOMOG commander, wrote one on his boss. Aliyu Mohammed, secretary to the federal government, and Yahaya Madaki, former governor of Katsina State, are also on the list. Even Ogbonnaya Onu, who became governor of Abia State only 15 months ago, can now boast of a biography which has a flattering title, *Ogbonnaya Onu: The Making of a Rare Breed*. Other writers pick on state governments and institutions as subjects for their books.

The writers say they are out to advance history. Some notable authors agree that the biographies have contributed to the growth of knowledge. Tolu Ajayi, a medical doctor and author, believes that a work of literature of any genre is of "enormous significance to literary advancement."

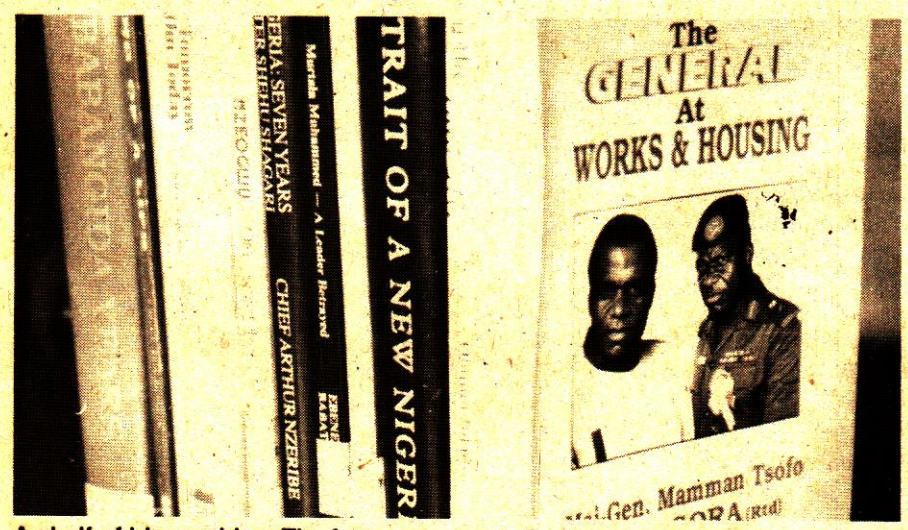
But the readers are are not as enthusiastic about the biographies as the likes of Ajayi. *Newswatch* investigations in major bookshops in Lagos indicate that the books are recording almost zero sales that booksellers are comtemplating returning them to the publishers.

Emeka Emenike of Abiola Bookshops explains why he thinks the books are gathering dust on the rack. "The authors of these books are nothing but political sycophants. The books are principally tools of cheap publicity. The whole thing is image-boosting venture which the discernible reader can do without."

What the "political" biographers lose in sales, however, they make up for at the book launch which they turn into a bazaar. This is one development creative writers like Festus Iyayi, a renowned novelist, detest. "To agree to a launching of a work," he says, "is to debase it; that is, reduce it to the status of an orphan for whom any parents will do."

The way out of denigrating literature may be adopting the Ken Saro-Wiwa style: organise a book launch but indicate in bold letters on the invitation card – NO DONATIONS.

Reported by Akanimo Udo-Akagha and Tunde Asaju



A shelf of biographies: The fastest means to fortune

End of Round One

Hooliganism mars some league matches but round one ends on good note

By Kayode Olaokun

REFEREE JOHN ZAKI HAD the match well under control until the 86th minute when visiting Stationery Stores of Lagos scored their first goal against Concord Football Club at the Muda Lawal Stadium, Abeokuta, May 22. It was the match to end the first round of the professional premier league for the year.

The goal rattled the home boys who needed at least a draw to regain the leadership of the league. Three minutes later, Zaki awarded a controversial penalty to Concord. That got the usually fanatical Store's supporters angry. They unleashed violence on the spectators. Concord supporters retaliated. In the melee, at least ten people, including a policeman were severely injured and several vehicles were damaged.

Two weeks earlier, Concord had been at the receiving end of a referee's controversial decision. In a week 13 match against Shooting Stars at the Lekan Salami Stadium, Ibadan, E.E. Ebito awarded a disputed penalty to the home team, a few minutes to the end of the game. It was converted into the only goal of the match stopping Concord's six-week winning streak. Still unsatisfied by the victory, Shooting Stars' supporters vandalised Concord bus.

These ugly incidents do not tell the whole story of the league which has this year been largely successful. For the first time since the league was introduced, away victories became the rule rather than the exception. Fourteen away wins were recorded at the end of the first round. Iwuanyanwu Nationale, which won the league in 1991, opened the floodgate of away victories in week two with a 2-1 win over Shooting Stars, thereby breaking the home invincibility of the Ibadan team. Nationale and Concord shared six away wins equally between them.

Festus Bolaji Okubule, chairman of the Nigerian Referees Association, NRA, attributes the trend to the "above-board performance" of referees. Referees, he reasons, no longer feel intimidated by home crowd, resulting in their being more firm and impartial in discharging their duties. Besides, determination by players and officials may have contributed to the impressive away record. Winning home matches at all cost is fast becoming old fashioned as demonstrated by Stores, the league defending champions, which thrashed USCA of Guinea Bissau 3-1 away in the first leg of the first round of the African Cup of Champions last march.

> *Since the league was introduced, away victories became the rule rather than the exception*

Even as the teams win away from their base, the strikers have been virtually on holidays, as in the past years. Bendel Insurance which topped the goal chart, found the net only 21 times in 15 matches an averagae of 1.4 goals per match. Rangers, which came second, scored 17 goals while Iwuanyanwu was third with 14 goals. For the players/ Gideon Imagudu of Concord and Davidson Owumi of Rangers emerged joint highest goal scorers with six goals each. This is ridiculously low compared with the foreign leagues where clubs record an average of two to three goals per match. As at week 31 of the Scottish league, Rangers, the probable winners had scored 76 goals an average of 2.4 goals per match. Next were Aberdeen which recorded 65 goals.

The poor striking ability of many players has left the defence largely untested. Vigilantee Insurance professionals, VIP, which paraded a leaky defence, conceded only 18 goals. A team like Stores conceded only six goals in fifteen matches - the least in the league. However newly promoted Concord emerged leaders in their fist round with 28 points, winning eight matches, drawing two and losing four. Iwuanyanwu came second with 27 points but with an inferior goal aggregiate.

To improve on their standing when the second round begins June 5, many clubs are using the break to strengthen their teams. New players have been recruited, while misfit have been placed on the transfer list. Clubs like the Shooting Stars and Concord, which changed their coaches towards the end of the first round, are expected to display renewed skills. But, Iwuanyanwu, BCC Lions and Concord, which last Wednesday embarked on European tours, seem to hold the ace.

How They Stand: Pro League Division One

Teams	P	W	SD	WSD	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Concord	15	8	2	–	4	14	12	+2	28
Iwuanyanwu	15	7	1	4	3	14	7	+7	27
Sharks	15	8	1	1	5	17	11	+6	27
BCC	15	7	2	2	4	12	9	+3	27
Insurance	15	7	2	1	5	21	14	+7	26
Stores	15	6	1	5	3	10	7	+3	25
Plateau	15	5	4	2	4	11	10	+1	25
El-Kanemi	14	6	1	13	4	13	10	+3	23
Berger	15	5	3	2	5	13	12	+1	23
Rangers	14	6	2	–	6	17	15	+2	22
Udoji	15	5	2	2	6	11	11	–	21
Pillars	15	4	1	4	6	7	12	-5	18
Shooting Stars	15	3	1	6	5	8	13	-5	17
VIP	15	2	3	3	7	11	18	-7	15
Rovers	15	3	1	3	8	6	11	-5	14
ACB	15	–	3	6	6	7	16	-9	12

Becker Unbound

By Chuka Momah

Becker has become a credit to his race – The Human Race

WHEN "BOOM BOOM" Boris Becker won the Wimbledon title in 1985 as a precocious 17 year-old, it was obvious that a star had been born. I was at Wimbledon to watch, enjoy and write about that tournament. Reporting that special event for *Newswatch* magazine expended all the superlatives that I could muster to describe Becker's spectacular performance. The question then was whether Becker was a flash in the pan? Many wondered if the unusual grass surface had made it possible for Becker to employ his tools, namely a big serve and good volley, to optimal use.

Although often plagued by injury and sometimes mentally fragile, it is clear that Becker has answered the questions of the critics. He has won four more grand slam titles, to bring the haul to five. These include three Wimbledon titles, one Australian Open title and one United States Open title. He has also won the year end master's or world championship twice and has been ranked number one in the world, albeit for a short period. His only failing at the time of writing this column was his inability to win a major clay court title. Clay is a highly tasking surface that favours baseliners more than serve and volley players like Becker. His huge bulk made him prone to injuries but he is overcoming his weight problems now.

His style of play was basically aggressive helped on by a seemingly endless flow of adrenaline. He was the quintessential German machine with blond hair and blue eyes. His credentials in this direction held more authenticity than that of his compatriot, the equally dominant Steffi Graf. Becker at another time in history would have suited perfectly the mould envisioned by the man who talked about the superiority of the Aryan race. I am talking about, Adolf Hitler, the man who refused to shake hands with the immortal Jesse Owens at the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936.

The original image of Becker was that of a ruthlessly efficient machine. At a post match conference which I attended in Madison Square garden in 1987, site of the Nabisco masters, he caused a minor sensation with the press when after losing a match he declared that he only lost a battle and not the war. Echoes of the Hitler days? Gradually, the humanity in Becker began to come to the fore. He admitted that after losing major matches he slipped into near depression during which time he rescued himself by writing — yes writing! Whatever it was that he wrote, he did not disclose. He also said that after breaking up with his girlfriend, Brenda Shulz, he was heart broken.

That was the seemingly arrogant, swash-backing, famous and wealthy Boris Becker: a young man who had dined with kings and presidents because of his proficiency in wielding a tennis racquet; Becker, the youth who had inspired major editorial write ups describing him as the perfect German. He started asking questions about things he considered unfair and unjust. At a stage he threatened to quit tennis altogether. He even refused to participate in the grandslam cup event saying that the two million dollar prize money given to the winner was obscene in a world riddled with poverty. He gave away a lot of his money to charity. When he threatened to quit tennis altogether, it took the savvy of his friend and manager Ion Tiriac to make him change his mind.

The ultimate happened when Becker, the toast of Germany, announced that he was in love with a black girl, Barbara Feltus. That was too much for some Germans to bear. The press hounded Becker. Headlines such as "Why Boris, Why not one of us?" appeared in the press. When Becker refused to shift ground, he was booed often in company of Feltus. Cartoons appeared depicting Becker's children from a possible marriage to Feltus: children with black bodies and white heads and with white bodies and black heads. Often, Feltus read the onslaught of a warped press and broke down in tears. Becker watched all these happenings and shook his head sadly for what he called "the arrogance and ignorance of racism". He said he understood then what the Hitler days were like. With little formal education other than the guidance of his architect father and life on the circuit, Becker has come a long way. He has finally announced his engagement to Feltus. He may not be aware of it but Becker has become credit to his race — The Human Race. ■